Elsie Spicer Eells

The Islands of Magic: Legends, Folk and Fairy Tales from the Azores

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THE ISLANDS OF MAGIC

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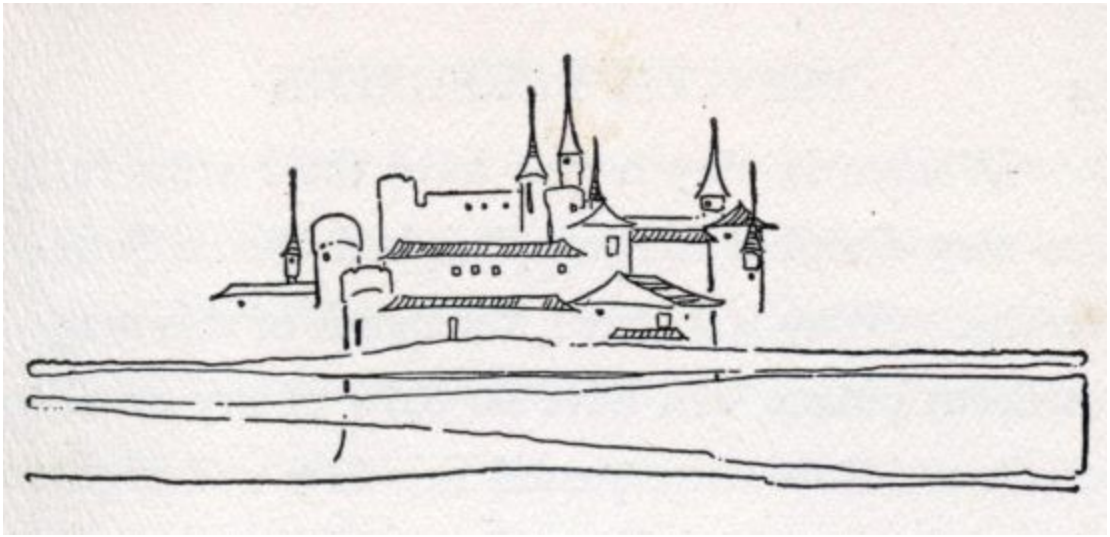

PRINCESS BLUEGREEN OF THE SEVEN CITIES

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The Story of the Origin of the Azores

Once upon a time in the lost kingdom of Atlantis there ruled a king whose name was Graywhite. He had married the beautiful Queen Rosewhite. They lived in a magnificent palace, but it was a sad place because there were no little children in it.

"There are plenty of babies in the homes of the poor peasants who can scarcely find food for them," mourned King Graywhite. "Why is it that I, the ruler of this vast rich kingdom, can have no child to inherit my wealth and my domains?"

"Women in tiny hovels have their arms full of rosy dimpled darlings," sighed Queen Rosewhite. "Why is it that I, the queen of this magnificent palace, can have no baby of my own?"

Queen Rosewhite passed her days and nights in weeping, while King Graywhite grew ugly and cruel to his subjects. Once he had been the kindest ruler in the world.

Things went on like this for several years. Queen Rosewhite's lovely face grew pale and wan, and her beautiful eyes became so sad that it hurt the hearts of her faithful subjects. The king's face lost its expression of jolly kindness and became sour and cruel. They offered prayers and solemn vows before all the holy shrines in the whole kingdom of Atlantis, but no child was born into the royal palace. King Graywhite grew so harsh and ugly to his subjects that the entire kingdom offered prayers and vows, too. As things were, life was not worth living in the kingdom of Atlantis.

In front of the royal palace there was a beautiful terrace where King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite had loved to walk in the days before they had grown cross and sad. One night when they were sitting upon the terrace enjoying the fresh soft evening air and the bright starlight there suddenly appeared a dazzling light which almost blinded them. Queen Rosewhite covered her face with her hands and the king bowed his proud head upon his breast.

"Do not fear to look at me," said a gentle voice.

King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite glanced up. They saw a tiny fairy standing before them with a circle of bright light dancing about her.

"King and Queen of Atlantis," said the gentle voice. "You shall have a child, a little daughter, prettier than the sunlight. I have heard your prayers

and vows, but I have also heard the prayers and vows of your poor subjects, too."

The glad news had brought a happy light into Queen Rosewhite's beautiful eyes, but now it faded out and a look of fear crept in. It had hurt the queen's loving heart to have her husband so cruel to his subjects. She often had told him that punishment would surely come upon him because of his harsh deeds.

"When the little princess is born," went on the fairy's voice, "I shall take her away from you for twenty years. No harm will come to her. I shall hide her away from you and all the world within seven beautiful cities which I shall construct in the loveliest part of your whole kingdom. Around these seven cities I shall place strong walls. At the end of twenty years, if your heart, King Graywhite, is free from sin and you have made proper restitution for all your wrongdoing, you shall receive the princess into your arms."

"Twenty years is a long time," said King Graywhite sadly. Tears were running down Queen Rosewhite's cheeks and she could not speak.

"You must wait until the twenty years are over," continued the fairy. "If you attempt to enter the strong walls before that time you shall fall dead and your kingdom shall be consumed by fire. Swear to me now in the presence of your faithful queen that you will not try to enter these strong walls which I shall construct about the seven cities."

"I swear it," said the king in a voice which trembled as he solemnly lifted his right hand.

The vision disappeared as suddenly as it had come, and King Graywhite and Queen Rosewhite sat alone in the bright starlight on the terrace before the royal palace.

"Have I been dreaming?" asked the king.

"It was not a dream," replied the queen.

Time passed and a beautiful baby daughter was born to the king and queen of Atlantis. They gave her the name of Princess Bluegreen. There was great rejoicing throughout the entire kingdom. Her birth was celebrated by lavish feasts and gay songs and dances.

When the little Princess Bluegreen was only three days old she disappeared from the royal palace. She had been carried away by the fairy to the seven cities which had been constructed to receive her.

Years passed. Every day the king and queen received reports from the fairy. They heard that the little Princess Bluegreen was well, and that each hour she grew lovelier. Sometimes there was almost joy in the palace when King Graywhite chuckled over the quaint sayings of the little princess which were repeated to him, and the queen heard with a tender smile of the tiny blue slippers and the green parasol which the fairy had given her. That day Queen Rosewhite bought new slippers for many little maids in the city.

As time went on, however, the royal palace of Atlantis grew almost as sad as it had been before the Princess Bluegreen had been born. Only to receive reports of their daughter was not enough to make the king and queen happy. They longed to see her with their own eyes and to clasp her in their arms.

As the weeks and months and years rolled by without seeing the little princess, King Graywhite resumed his cruel treatment of his subjects. He was growing old and his nature grew sour with the years. Queen Rosewhite tried to reason with him.

"We must bear this thing with patience," she told him. "We brought it upon ourselves."

The king kept raging against the fairy and did not notice Queen Rosewhite's politeness in saying "we" instead of "you." It was the king who was responsible for all the cruelty. Good Queen Rosewhite had never had a cruel thought in her whole blameless life.

At last the day of the eighteenth birthday of the Princess Bluegreen grew near.

"Are you sure that it is not eighteen years which the fairy said, instead of twenty years?" asked King Graywhite querulously.

Queen Rosewhite assured him that it was twenty years as he well knew. The king's anger broke out fiercely.

"I will no longer be kept from my daughter!" he cried.

"Would you break the vow which you solemnly made to the fairy in my presence?" asked Queen Rosewhite trembling. She had never dreamed that he would dare to break it. Now, however, she was thoroughly frightened at the thought which came to her.

"I'll break that foolish vow!" shouted the king savagely.

Tears rolled down the cheeks of good Queen Rosewhite.

"No good will come of this," she mourned. "Be prudent, dear king. It is only two years more which we have to wait."

"The last two years will be the hardest ones of all!" raged King Graywhite. "I cannot endure it!"

That very day he started to prepare the army for the expedition to the Seven Cities, amid the queen's lamentations and in spite of her fears and warnings.

"Be wise and patient, dear king. Give up this wild expedition," were her last words to him; when, at length, all the preparations completed, he set out with his great army upon the dangerous quest of the seven cities surrounded by their strong walls in the loveliest part of the whole kingdom of Atlantis.

King Graywhite marched on and on. It was a long and perilous journey and the army suffered many hardships on the way. It seemed as if they would never arrive, but at last they drew near to what everybody knew to

be the most beautiful part of the whole kingdom, where the fairy had taken the Princess Bluegreen to conceal her.

Storms raged; lightning flashed; ominous roarings and rumblings sounded from the depths of the earth.

"Let us hasten back to the royal palace before it is too late," besought the generals of King Graywhite's army.

"On! On!" cried the king. "Do you think I would abandon this expedition now?"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a huge rock fell from its place near where he stood and rushed away down the mountainside. The earth trembled violently beneath their feet. Fearful rumblings and roarings sounded all about them.

"On! ON!" shouted the maddened king.

Before them rose the great walls which the fairy had built around the seven cities. Within these walls was the Princess Bluegreen radiant with the beauty of her eighteen winters and summers passed in peace and happiness under the watchful care of the kind fairy. The thought of her thrilled the heart of King Graywhite.

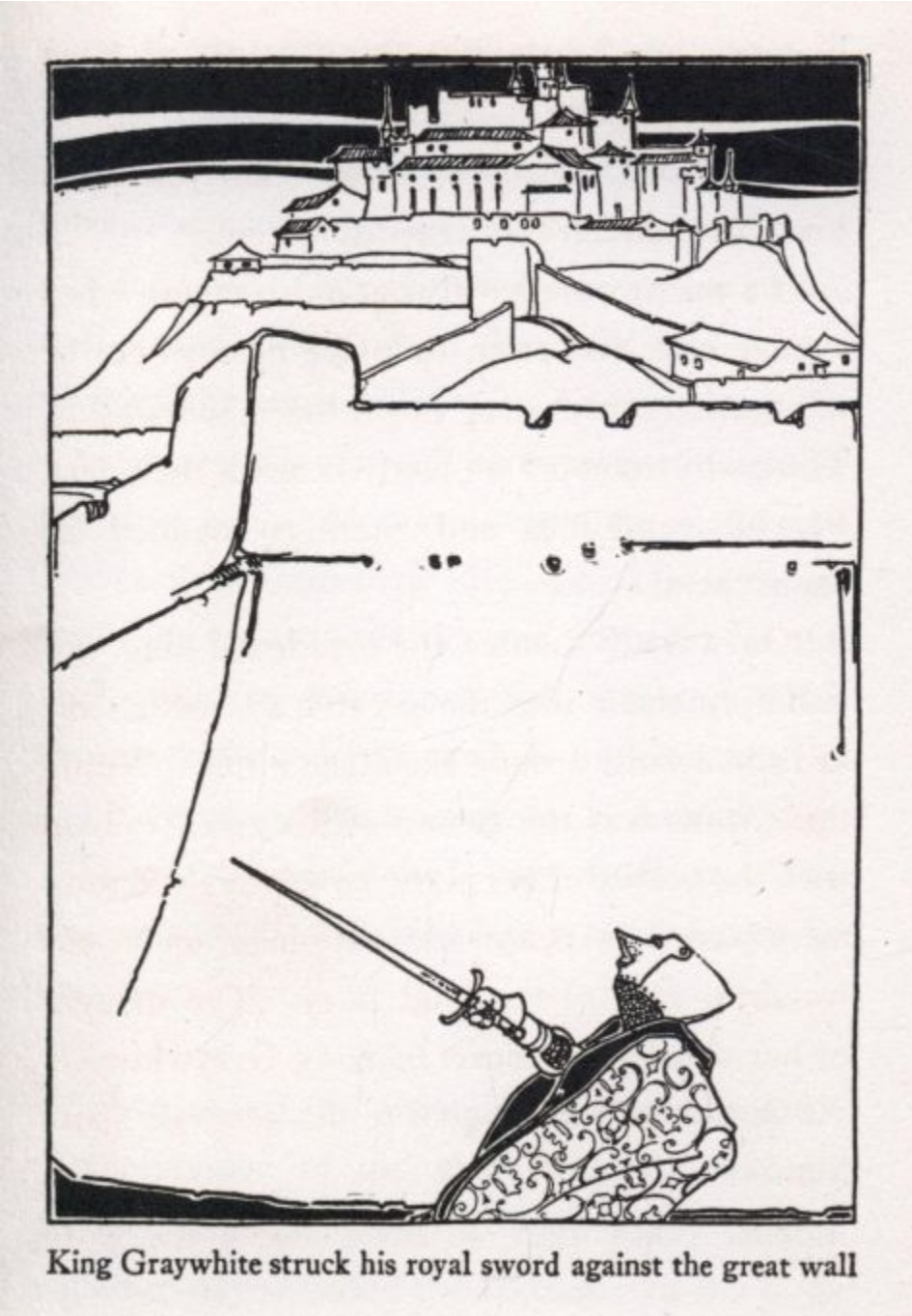
"On! On!" he shouted to the generals about him.

"On! On!" they, in turn, passed the word along to the trembling soldiers which composed the royal army.

With the fearful sounds and shakings about them, the poor men heartily wished they were safe at home. They rallied, however, for a final charge and swept up to the walls which surrounded the seven cities.

King Graywhite struck his royal sword against the great wall. At that moment the walls fell. The earth beneath their feet rose. Great flames swept up towards the sky and rushed over the land, sweeping everything

before them. Then the sea raged over the earth in violence until it had covered the whole kingdom of Atlantis.



King Graywhite struck his royal sword against the great wall

The fairy's curse had been fulfilled. The king was dead. His kingdom was consumed by fire.

When at last the waters grew calm again all that remained of the great rich kingdom of Atlantis was the group of nine rocky islands which to-day is called the Azores. In the largest of these islands, St. Michael, there is still an enchanted spot called Seven Cities. Great wall-like mountains tower toward the sky. In the crater valley amid the wall-like mountains there is a lake of green and one of blue. The blue lake is where the beautiful Princess Bluegreen left her little blue slippers, they say, and the green lake is where she left her lovely green parasol.

THE ISLANDS OF FLOWERS

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Another Story of the Origin of the Islands

Paradise is, of course, ruled by loving law. All places good to live in are governed by laws.

Long, long ago there was a little angel who broke one of the rules of Paradise. Of course she had to be punished. Punishment always follows broken laws. She was banished from her heavenly home. Never again could she join in the chorus of celestial music. Never again could she look up into the face of the great King.

Now it happened that this little angel loved the flowers of Paradise especially. For the last time she walked through the heavenly gardens.

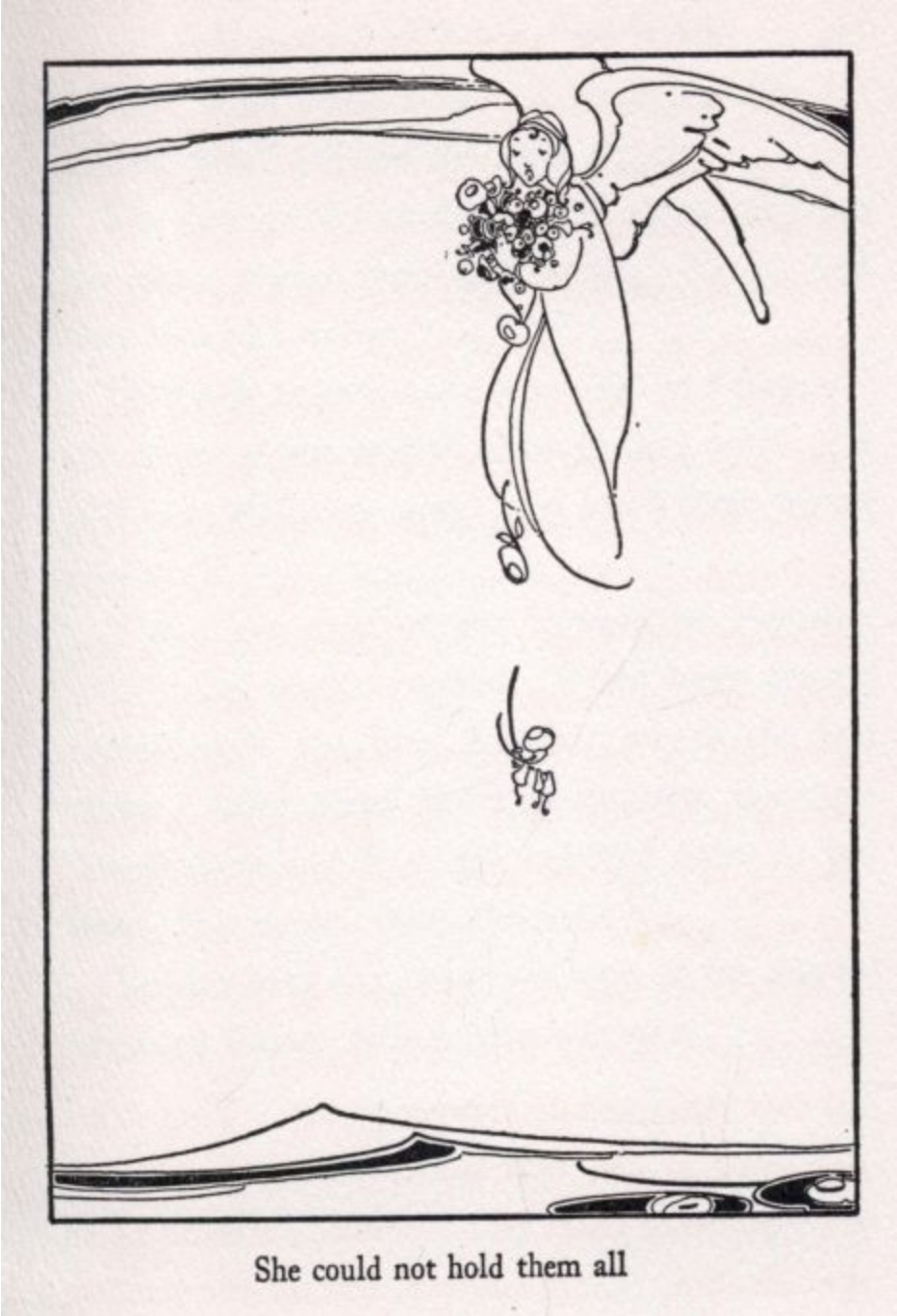
"Oh, my exquisite ones, I cannot bear to leave you!" she sobbed to her favorite blossoms. "It breaks my heart!"

The flowers lifted their fair faces to hers in loving sympathy. They breathed out their sweetest perfume at her gentle touch. They stretched out their hands to catch her trailing garments as she passed them.

"My best beloveds! You are asking me to take you with me!" cried the little angel.

She filled her arms with the lovely blossoms of Paradise. Now the angel was a very little angel and the flowers she gathered made a very large armful indeed. She could not bear to leave any of her favorites behind. Slowly and sorrowfully she left the heavenly gardens. Slowly and sorrowfully she passed outside the celestial gate.

When she had left the gates of Paradise far behind the lovely blossoms in her grasp were all that remained of Heaven to her. They filled her arms so full that she could not hold them all. Some of them fell. Down, down to earth they floated. They came to rest on the smiling blue waters of the broad Atlantic.



She could not hold them all

She could not hold them all

"Oh, what shall I do! I have lost my exquisite ones!" sobbed the little angel.

The flowers of Paradise smiled up at her from the place where they had fallen. Never had they looked lovelier.

"My best beloveds are beautiful and happy!" she cried as she smiled through her tears. "I still have all I can carry! I'll leave them where they are!"

There are nine of the flowers of Paradise which the angel dropped. They have always remained in the blue Atlantic where she left them. After many years Portuguese mariners found them and Portugal claimed them as her own. She named them the Azores.

To this very day, however, one of the islands is called Flores, which means flowers.

WHY DOGS SNIFF

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The Story of the Dogs' Dinner Party

Once upon a time the dogs gave a dinner party. All the dogs were invited and all the dogs accepted the invitation. There were big dogs and little dogs and middle-sized dogs. There were black dogs and white dogs and brown dogs and gray dogs and yellow dogs and spotted dogs. There were dogs with long tails and dogs with short tails and dogs with no tails at all. There were dogs with little sharp-pointed ears and dogs with big flat drooping ears. There were dogs with long slender noses and dogs with short fat turn-up noses. All these dogs came to the party.

Now the dinner was a most elaborate affair. Everything had been arranged with the utmost care. All the good things to eat were spread out upon the rocks by the sea. A gay sparkling little brook brought water to

drink. The sun was shining brightly and a soft gentle little breeze was blowing. Everything seemed absolutely perfect.

But there was a cross fussy old dog who came to the party. She was a yellow dog, they say. Nothing ever suited her. Whenever she went to a party she always found fault with something. Sometimes there was too little to eat and sometimes there was too much. Sometimes the hot things were not hot enough and sometimes the cold things were not cold enough. Sometimes the hot things were so hot they burned her mouth and the cold things so cold that they gave her indigestion. There was always something wrong.

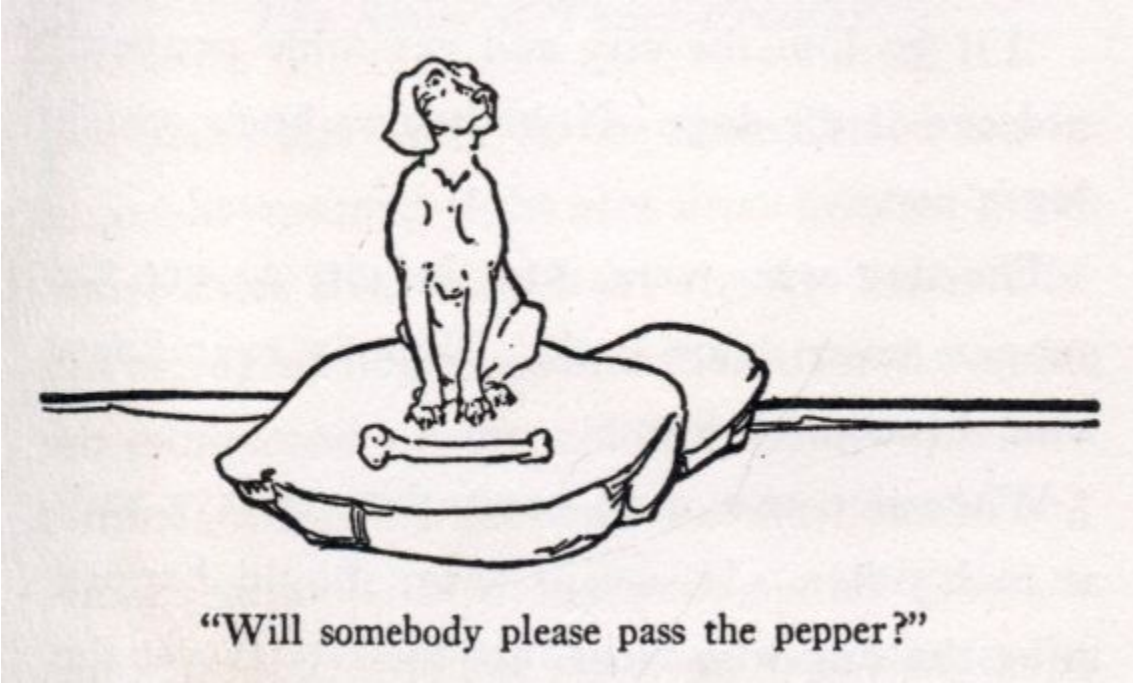
At this party, however, there was not too much to eat and there was not too little to eat. The hot things were all just hot enough and the cold things were all just cold enough. Everything seemed to be exactly as it should be.

"How good everything tastes!" remarked the big black dog between polite mouthfuls.

"Everything is seasoned exactly right," added the black and white spotted dog between mouthfuls which were entirely too large to be polite.

That was an unfortunate remark. The cross fussy yellow dog heard it. She noticed immediately that the big juicy bone she was eating had not been seasoned with pepper.

"Will somebody please pass the pepper?" she asked.



"Will somebody please pass the pepper?"

All the black dogs and white dogs and brown dogs and yellow dogs and gray dogs and spotted dogs fell over each other trying to find the pepper to pass. There was not a single bit of pepper at that dinner party.

"I can't eat a mouthful until I have some pepper," whined the yellow dog.

"I'll go into the city and get some pepper," said one of the dogs. Nobody ever knew which dog it was.

The dog who went into the city to get the pepper never came back. Nobody ever knew what became of him.

Whenever two dogs meet they always sniff at each other. If one of them should happen to be the dog who went into the city to get the pepper, he would surely smell of pepper.

LONGSTAFF, PINEPULLER AND ROCKHEAVER

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The Story of Three Friends

Long ago there lived a blacksmith upon whose strong right arm there swelled great muscles and whose big hairy fist was capable of delivering so heavy a blow that all the men in the village and nearby countryside stood in awe of him. He had a hot temper as well as a strong right arm and his pretty young wife grew so afraid of him that she ran away into the forest, taking her baby son with her. The blacksmith had become crosser and crosser of late because the baby sometimes cried at night and disturbed his rest.

In the deep forest the young wife found nuts and herbs and wild fruits to eat. The baby boy thrived most marvelously. Soon he was big and strong, able to kill wild beasts to add to their food. At last his strength was so great that he could lift big rocks and pull up huge trees.

One day he said to his mother, "Dearest one, I'd like to leave you for a little while. I want to go back to the village where I was born. The stories you have told me about it keep ringing in my ears. I must see the place for myself. Do you mind, mother dear, if I take this journey?"

His mother had long foreseen that a day would come when he would no longer be content to live alone with her in the deep forest. Her heart ached but she gave her consent to the expedition.

When the lad reached the village he went straight to the shop of the blacksmith. His mother had described it to him so often that he had no difficulty in finding it. He knew at once that the man at the forge was his father. He looked exactly as he had always imagined his father looked.

"Good day," said he. "I'd like you to weld an iron bar for me, a bar as tall as the tallest tree in front of your shop."

The blacksmith glanced at the lad and then at the tree.

"You must have made a mistake in your measurements," he replied. "You don't know what you are talking about."

The boy from the forest smiled quietly and stepped a trifle nearer to the blacksmith.

"You are quite right," he admitted. "Thank you for pointing out to me my mistake. I should have said that I want this iron bar made twice as tall as the tallest tree before your door. I want it to be of good thickness, too. I plan to use it as my staff."

The blacksmith looked the lad over more carefully. In truth he appeared as if he might be able to use the staff after all. The blacksmith hastily agreed to make it at once, and he didn't say a word about arranging the price in advance according to his custom.

"Have my staff ready for me next week," commanded the boy as he bade the blacksmith good-by.

When at last the lad was once more with his mother in the deep forest he told her all that had passed. "When I return for my staff I want you to go with me, dear mother," were his words when he had ended his story.

"I!" cried the woman in alarm. "I'd be afraid to go! From your description I am sure the blacksmith is in truth your father, and I fear that his disposition has not improved with the years."

"Don't be afraid, dear heart," said the son. "I'll be there and I'll take care of you. I'll see that he does you no harm."

They started out on their journey, and just a week from the day of the lad's first visit to the blacksmith shop he stood once more in the door. He had left his mother hidden behind the bushes and shrubs.

"Good day," he said to the blacksmith. "Is my staff ready?"

"Yes, indeed. It is entirely completed," replied the blacksmith more politely than he was in the habit of speaking even to the parish priest himself. "I have just sent for two yokes of oxen and enough men to drag it out of my shop."

"That is quite unnecessary," responded the boy. "I'm sorry indeed to hear that you have inconvenienced yourself."

He picked up the staff and tossed it about as jauntily as if it had been a slender cane. The blacksmith stared at him in amazement, his mouth wide open and his eyes bulging out of his head.

"May I ask who you are?" he asked as soon as he could catch his breath.

"My name from this day forth shall be Longstaff," replied the lad. "And it so happens that I am your own son."

The blacksmith listened in surprise while the boy told the story of the years he and his mother had lived in the deep forest. He embraced his son tenderly.

"You are indeed a son to be proud of!" he cried. "Come and live with me. We shall have a happy life together."

The blacksmith was thinking that a strong young man like this would be a great help around the shop.

Longstaff shook his head. "Thank you, but I cannot tarry here," he said. "I must go away and see the world a bit. My mother, however, is waiting behind the bushes. I fear she will be very lonely while I am away."

When Longstaff's mother came in response to his call her husband embraced her lovingly and kissed her. "I've really missed you about the house while you have been away," he told her.

"If you are not good to her you'll hear from me," said, his son as he looked him straight in the eye.

Longstaff then set out to see the world, travelling from one country to another. After a time he came to a place where there was a man pulling up pine trees by the roots as easily as if they were the weeds in your garden.

"Good day," said Longstaff. "What is your name?"

"I am called PINEPULLER," was the reply. "I'm very strong, as you can see for yourself, but I've heard that there is somebody stronger than I am. His name is LONGSTAFF, I am told."

Longstaff gave his iron staff a gay toss into the air and caught it again in his hand.

"That happens to be my name," he said. "I like you. Won't you join me in my travels about the country? We two would have a jolly time together."

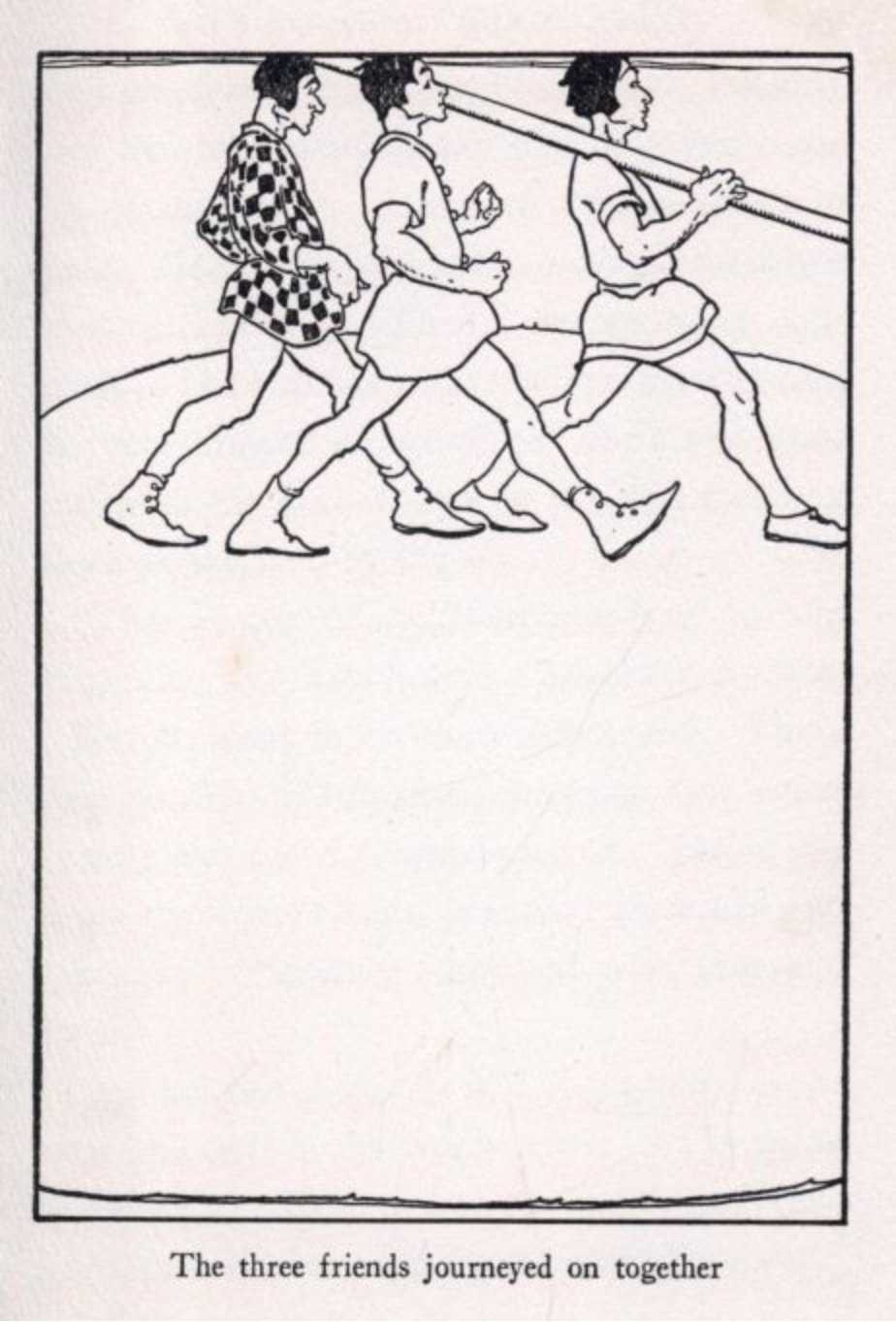
Pinepuller accepted the invitation and together they journeyed on. Soon they came to a place where there was a man picking up great rocks and tossing them about as lightly as if they had been rubber balls.

"Good day," said Longstaff. "What is your name?"

"My name is ROCKHEAVER," replied the other. "You can see for yourself that I am very strong. I've heard, however, that there is somebody stronger than I am. His name is LONGSTAFF, I am told."

"That happens to be my name," said Longstaff, "and this is my friend Pinepuller. You are just the man to complete our little party. Won't you join us as we travel about the country?"

Rockheaver accepted the invitation with glee and the three friends journeyed on together from that hour. Everywhere they went they had everything their own way because of their great strength.



The three friends journeyed on together

The three friends journeyed on together

One day Longstaff, Pinepuller and Rockheaver sat on a rock by the sea. Suddenly they spied two pretty girls tossing glass balls back and forth and catching them. They had not stood there on the sand a moment before when the three friends had passed that way. Possibly they had been bathing and had only just come out of the water. Longstaff ran to speak to them.

He put out his hand and caught their two glass balls at once. Then a strange thing happened. The two beautiful maidens disappeared the very minute Longstaff put their two glass balls into his pocket, and he was left standing alone on the sand by the sea.

"That is queer," he complained as he told Pinepuller and Rockheaver what had happened.

Not far away there was a little house. There were no signs of life about the place and consequently the three friends entered. Inside the house there were beds, beautiful furniture and a kitchen completely furnished with pots and pans.

"I like this house," said Longstaff, as he seated himself in the largest chair. "I'm going to rest a bit and you two can go hunting. When you return I'll have the dinner cooked for you."

Accordingly, Pinepuller and Rockheaver went away to hunt for game. Longstaff rested for a while in the big chair and then he went into the kitchen to light the fire. Soon the fire was burning merrily and the water in the kettle was bubbling away cozily. Longstaff cooked the dinner exactly as his mother had taught him long ago in the deep forest. Just for a minute he turned his back to hunt for the salt. When he turned around the pots and the frying pan were gone from the fire. There was a tiny dwarf with red boots disappearing through the kitchen floor with Longstaff's good dinner.

Longstaff gasped. He was not at all accustomed to having his dinner stolen from under his very nose, as it were.

Soon Pinepuller and Rockheaver came back with the hares they had killed in the hunt. They looked at the dying fire, at the empty pots and frying pan, and at the dazed expression on Longstaff's face.

"Where's the dinner?" asked Pinepuller. "I'm as hungry as a bear. You said you'd have it ready when we got back."

"I know what he's done!" cried Rockheaver. "He has eaten all the dinner and hasn't left a single mouthful for us!"

When Longstaff told them the story of the dwarf with red boots who had stolen the dinner it was difficult to make them believe it.

"Very well," said he, "if you won't take my word for it, why doesn't Pinepuller stay in the kitchen and cook these hares? Rockheaver and I will go away and you can see what happens."

Accordingly, Longstaff and Rockheaver went away and Pinepuller made a stew of the hares. While he was hunting for the salt the little dwarf with red boots came out from under the table and stole the stew. Pinepuller turned around just in time to catch him at it. He raised his big arm to seize him, but the dwarf, in the twinkling of an eye, vanished into the floor, taking the stew with him.

When Longstaff and Rockheaver returned Pinepuller told what had happened. "I believe you now," said he to Longstaff. "I ask your pardon for doubting your word."

However, Rockheaver was not convinced. "I know what has happened," said he. "You were so hungry you couldn't wait for us and you ate up the stew. You and Longstaff have plotted that I shall go with an empty stomach this day."

"Let Rockheaver, then, be the one to stay in the kitchen," suggested Longstaff. "We have brought back other hares from the hunt. Let him cook them and see what happens."

Longstaff and Pinepuller went away, leaving Rockheaver to cook the hares. Again the dwarf with red boots jumped out from under the table and stole the dinner. When his two friends returned Rockheaver begged their pardon for his moments of distrust.

"These are surely queer doings," said Longstaff. "I'm going to make an investigation. I'll not rest in peace until I find out where this red-booted dwarf lives and where these three dinners have gone. Come and help me dig up the ground under the kitchen."

At once Rockheaver dug up the floor of the kitchen and Pinepuller pulled out the earth beneath. Soon they had a deep well-like hole reaching down into the ground. While they had been digging, Longstaff had made a ladder out of the branches of the trees, a ladder so long that it could reach very far into the earth.

"I'm going to be the one to descend into this hole," remarked Longstaff when he thought that it was quite deep enough.

Indeed his two friends were entirely willing that he should.

He lowered the ladder he had made and very cautiously he crept down into the earth. At the foot of the ladder he came to what looked like a heavy barred door. He had brought his big iron staff with him, of course, and with this he knocked hard at the door.

"Who is there?" called out a voice from within.

"I am Longstaff." "Open."

"Go away as fast as you can," said the voice. "This is the home of the seven-headed serpent. If he catches you it will be serious. You'll be enchanted and can never get away."

"I'd like to meet this serpent for a minute or two," said Longstaff.

The heavy door swung open and Longstaff stepped inside. Immediately he heard a rushing like a great wind. With his big iron staff he struck a mighty blow at the seven-headed serpent. He hit him just in time to avoid being enchanted. The huge seven-headed serpent fell to the ground completely stunned by Longstaff's blow.

At the first drop of blood which fell from the wounded monster a beautiful maiden appeared near the door. Longstaff recognized her at once as one of the two girls he had seen on the seashore tossing and catching the two glass balls. He took the balls out of his pocket.

"Do you recognize these?" he asked the maiden.

"Indeed I do," she replied. "One of these glass balls belongs to me and the other belongs to my sister. She, too, has been enchanted and is behind the next door you see ahead of you."

"I'll get you away from this evil place," said Longstaff, "and then I'll see what I can do to help your sister."

He lifted her in his arms and started to carry her up the ladder.

"Wait just a minute," she said. "I think I'd better give you back this glass ball. I'll not be able to speak a word while you have it, but I think you need it more than I."

She gave him back the glass ball and then they hastened up the long ladder. When Pinepuller and Rockheaver saw the lovely maiden in Longstaff's arms they were filled with amazement.

"She is a princess who has been enchanted," explained Longstaff. "Take good care of her while I return for her sister. Then we will restore these fair damsels to their father, the king, who has long mourned them as dead."

Once more Longstaff crept down the ladder into the depths of the earth. The seven-headed serpent was still lying where he had fallen and Longstaff stepped past him and knocked at the door which barred his way.

"Who is there?" called out a voice from within.

"This is Longstaff! Open!"

"Hurry away as fast as you can. This is the home of the dwarf with red boots," said the voice.

"That red-booted dwarf is exactly the person I want to see," answered Longstaff, holding fast to his heavy iron bar which his father had made him long ago in the blacksmith's shop.

The door slowly swung open and Longstaff stepped inside. At once he heard the footsteps of the red-booted dwarf. The tiny dwarf looked up at him in surprise.

"We'll fight and see who is the best man," stormed he. "You fight with the black sword and I'll use the white one."

"No indeed," said Longstaff. "I'll use the white sword and you the black. Otherwise I'll not wait to fight with swords but will choose my own weapon which happens to be this iron staff of mine."

The little red-booted dwarf looked up at the heavy iron staff in Longstaff's hand. It could crush him very easily indeed.

"Very well!" said he. "Just as you like!"

Longstaff fought with the white sword and the dwarf with the black one, and soon the dwarf had fallen, though his great agility made up for his lack of size. With the first drop of blood which fell from the red-booted dwarf the beautiful princess was disenchanted.

She gave her glass ball back to Longstaff after she had recognized it as her own; and, safe in his arms, she was borne up the long ladder to the place where her sister was awaiting her with Pinepuller and Rockheaver.

"I've left my staff behind!" cried Longstaff in alarm. "I must go down once more and get it."

He had never been without his staff near at hand even when he was asleep. Hastily he again descended the ladder. There was his staff lying where he had dropped it when he took the white sword. When he turned around to go up the ladder again, it had disappeared. His friends had forgotten all about him, so interested had they become in the two beautiful maidens. Even at that moment they were on their way to the king's palace. They had pulled up the ladder, never giving another thought as to how Longstaff was going to get out of the hole.

Longstaff shouted in vain. Then he remembered how the dwarf had appeared in the kitchen. Evidently the red-booted dwarf knew how to get up to the surface of the earth. A drink from Longstaff's flask quickly revived him. He reached for the white sword ready to fight again.

"Wait a minute, my friend," said Longstaff. "You are now my prisoner. I'll let you go as soon as you perform a little service for me. Just take me up to the surface of the earth."

"That is easy," answered the dwarf. "Take hold of my hand."

As soon as Longstaff had taken the hand of the red-booted dwarf he felt himself rise. In a moment he was safe outside the hole.

"There's another thing I want you to do for me before I let you go," he said. "Take me to the king's palace."

Longstaff took hold of the dwarf's hand and in a moment more they were at the palace. It was only a minute after the king's daughters had been restored to him. The royal palace was wild with joy. Even the fact that the two lovely maidens were dumb was almost overlooked.

When Pinepuller and Rockheaver saw Longstaff's angry eyes they ran away as fast as they could. They were never seen near the royal palace again.

Longstaff drew the two glass balls from his pocket and gave one to each of the two beautiful princesses. At once they could speak, and together they told their story to their father, the king.

"You may wed whichever princess you prefer," said the king to Longstaff when he had heard how he had made the bold rescue.

Longstaff wedded the princess who was more beautiful than her sister, and when the king died he reigned over the whole kingdom.

THE TABLE, THE SIFTER AND THE PINCHERS

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The Story of the King's Laborer and His Wages

Once upon a time there was a man who was very poor. He had so many children it was difficult to earn money enough to provide for them all. Accordingly, he left home and hired out to the king of a distant land.

At the end of a year's time he went to the king and said: "I have served you faithfully for a whole year. Now I wish to return to my wife and children. Pay me, I pray you, what you owe me for my work."

The king said: "I will not reward you in money. I will give you something better than money. Here is a table. When you are hungry all you have to do is to say, 'Table, set yourself.' Then the table will immediately be spread with food."

"Thank you, good king," replied the man. "With this table it will be easy enough to provide food even for all my large family."

When the man had started home with his table he soon grew hungry. He put it down by the roadside under a leafy tree and said, "Table, set yourself." Immediately it was full of the most delicious food. The man ate all he could and gave the rest away to some beggars who passed that way.

"It is a lucky day for us," said the beggars as they thanked him.

That night the man stopped at an inn. He was so delighted with the magic powers of his table that he foolishly told the innkeeper about it.

"That would be a most excellent table for me to possess," thought the innkeeper. "With this in my possession I would soon be a rich man. I could charge my guests a price in proportion to the rich food I would serve them, and I'd never have to spend a cent of my money to buy supplies."

That night the innkeeper stole the table and substituted another for it which looked exactly like it. Early in the morning the man loaded the table on his back and hurried home to his wife and children.

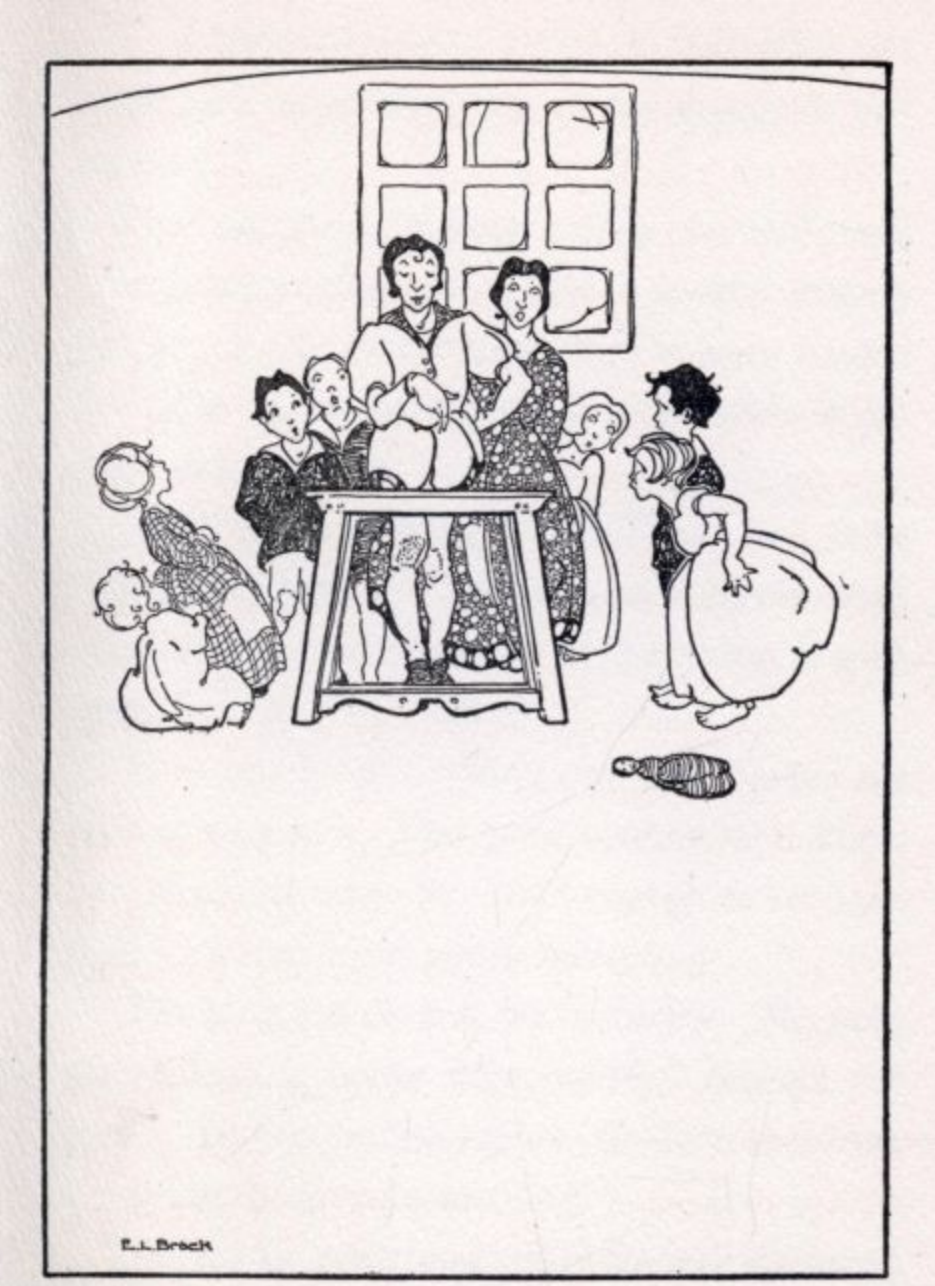
"We'll never be hungry again!" he cried as he embraced his wife. "Never again shall our children call for food when we have nothing to give them!"

"How much did the king pay you?" asked his wife in surprise. The good woman well knew how much it cost to buy food enough to keep all their children from going hungry.

"The king did not pay me in money. He gave me something better than money," replied the man. "Do you see this table? Call the children. I want to show you something."

The man's wife and children all gathered about the table, watching it curiously.

"Table, set yourself," said the man.



"Table, set yourself," said the man

The table remained standing in the center of the floor just as it was.

"What trick is this?" asked the good wife. She had been a bit suspicious from the moment she had heard that there was no money in her husband's pockets.

"I'll get the beggars I fed to prove to you what this table provided yesterday," he said when he had told all the story.

"You'd better go back to the king as fast as you can," advised the wife. "Take back this good-for-nothing table which he has imposed upon you and ask for some real money instead."

The man did as his wife advised. The king was thoughtful for a moment. He guessed that the man had been robbed.

At last he said: "I'll give you a sifter this time. Then when you need money all you have to do is to say, 'Sifter, sift!' It will sift out money as freely as if it were flour."

The man was delighted with the sifter. He sifted his pockets full of money immediately and hurried home. On the way he again spent the night at the inn.

"When I brought my table home it wouldn't work," he told the innkeeper. "I took it back and got something in its place which is all right."

The innkeeper watched him sift out money.

"Why don't I get that sifter?" thought the innkeeper. "I work very hard serving my guests even though the table provides the food for them. If I had this sifter I wouldn't have to work. I'd close the inn and pass the rest of my life enjoying the money I'd sift into my pockets so easily."

That night he stole the sifter and substituted another which looked exactly like it.

When the man reached home there was plenty of money in his pockets and his wife and children were happy for a little while. However, he soon wanted to display the magic gifts of his new sifter. Accordingly, he called his family together.

"Sifter, sift," he commanded.

The sifter behaved just like any ordinary sifter.

"You have been tricked again!" cried his wife. She was very cross indeed and told her husband exactly what she thought of him.

Home was not a comfortable place for him that day, so he decided to hurry back to the king after he had emptied all the money in his pockets into his wife's lap.

"This will supply you for a while," he said. "It is quite as much as any ordinary husband would have brought home for a year's work."

"A woman hates to have her husband made a fool of," replied the woman as she rolled up the money and tucked it away carefully.

When the king had heard the story he was entirely convinced that the man had an enemy who had stolen both the table and the sifter.

"Where did you spend the night?" he asked.

The man told of passing the night in the inn.

"I've heard that innkeeper is going to retire from business, he has become so rich," said the king. "You'd better hurry there as fast as you can before he leaves town."

The laborer nodded his head thoughtfully, a wise look creeping into his eyes.

"Take these pinchers," ordered the king. "Use them on that innkeeper until he gives back the table and the sifter."

When the innkeeper was sore and black and blue from the pinchers he gave back the table and the sifter.

After that there were prosperous days indeed for the king's laborer. Whenever the children were hungry, he would say: "Table, set yourself," and immediately the table would be full of the most delicious food. Whenever his wife said, "I need some money," he would call out, "Sifter, sift," and the sifter would sift out money as freely and easily as if it were flour.

As for the pinchers, they proved to be quite as useful as the other gifts he received from the king. Whenever the children were naughty he had only to glance in the direction of those pinchers. The children would immediately behave as they should.

LINDA BRANCA AND HER MASK

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The Story of the Girl Who Did Not Like To Be Pretty

Long ago there lived a girl who was so pretty she grew tired of being beautiful and longed to be ugly. She was so attractive that all the young men in the whole city wanted to marry her. Every night the street in front of her house was full of youths who came to sing beneath her balcony.

Linda Branca, that was the girl's name, grew tired of being kept awake nights. It is well enough for a little while to hear songs about one's pearly teeth and snowy arms, one's flashing eyes and waving hair, one's rosebud mouth and fairylike feet; but a steady diet of it becomes decidedly wearing.

"I wish I were as homely as that girl who is passing by," she remarked one day. "Then I could sleep nights." "If I were as ugly looking as that I'd have a chance to select a really good husband perhaps. With so many to choose from it is terribly confusing. I'll never be able to make any choice at all as things are now. I'm afraid I'll die unwedded," she added as she carefully surveyed the girl's coarse hair, her large feet and hands, her ugly big mouth and ears and small red-lidded eyes. "That girl has a much better

chance of a successful marriage than I have, with all this tiresome crowd of suitors to drive me distracted!"

The girl in the street heard her words and looked up. When she saw how lovely Linda Branca was she was amazed indeed at the words she had heard. She thought that she must have made a mistake and asked Linda Branca to say it all over again.

"You can be exactly as homely as I am," declared the girl when at last she had sufficiently recovered from her surprise to find her tongue. "I am an artist. I can prepare a mask for you which will make you just as ugly as I am."

"Go on and make it as soon as you can!" cried Linda Branca, clapping her little hands in joy.

That evening the suitors in the street under the balcony thought that the lovely Linda Branca had become very gracious. She was frequently to be seen on the balcony looking eagerly up and down the street as if she were expecting some one. Her dark eyes were sparkling and her fair cheek had a rosy flush upon it which they had never seen before.

"The beautiful Linda Branca is more charming than ever," was the burden of their songs that night.

Linda Branca was so excited about her new mask that she could not have slept even if there had been no suitors to disturb her with their songs. When at last she fell asleep towards morning it was only to dream that the new mask had the face of a donkey.

It was not until the next week that the mask finally arrived. Linda Branca had grown very impatient and was almost in despair lest she should never receive it. When at last the girl brought it one could easily see why it had taken a whole week to prepare it. So like a human face it was that it was plain that the making of it had called forth great patience and skill as well as necessary time.

"It is even uglier than I had hoped it would be!" cried Linda Branca in delight when she saw it.

Surely, when she tried it on no one of her suitors would ever have recognized the fair Linda Branca of their songs.

Now Linda Branca had no mother, and her father was away on business, so it was an easy matter to prepare for her departure.

Linda Branca's father was a man of wealth who spared no money in giving his daughter beautiful gowns to enhance her rare beauty. She had one dress of blue trimmed with silver and another of blue embroidered in gold. As she packed up a few belongings to take with her, she decided to add these two favorite garments.

"Who knows but I may need them sometime?" she mused as she rolled them up carefully.

With the ugly mask upon her face, and dressed in a long dark cloak, she quietly stole out of the house. She went to the king's palace in a neighboring city and inquired if they were in need of a maid.

She quietly stole out of the house

"Ask my son. It is he who rules here," said the king's mother.

The king looked at Linda Branca with a critical eye.

"I hired my last servant because she was so pretty," he remarked. "I think I'll hire this one because she is so ugly."

Accordingly, Linda Branca became a servant in the royal palace. She soon discovered, however, that it was the pretty maid who received all the favors. It was good to sleep nights without being disturbed by the songs of suitors under her window. Nevertheless, after a time, Linda Branca could not fail to see that it was the pretty maid who had the happy life.

"I believe I'd almost be willing to be pretty again," said Linda Branca to herself. "Perhaps it has some advantages."

She knew very well that the pretty maid was not as tired as she that night.

The next day there was to be a great feast which was to last for two days. Linda Branca asked the queen if she might be allowed to attend.

"Ask my son," said the queen. "It is he who rules here."

"May I go to the feast?" asked Linda Branca when she was blacking the king's boots.

"Look out or I'll throw my boot at you," said the king.

That night when the feast had already begun, she dressed herself carefully in the robe of blue trimmed with silver. It was indeed a pleasure to remove the ugly mask and find that she was still just as lovely as when the crowds of suitors sang about her great beauty.

That night at the feast every one talked about the beauty of the mysterious stranger in the dress of blue trimmed with silver. The king himself danced with her. He was completely captivated by her charm.

"Where do you come from, lovely lady?" he asked.

"I come from the land of the boot," replied Linda Branca with a gay laugh.

The king was completely mystified, for he did not know where the land of the boot was. He asked the queen and all the wisemen of the court, but there was not a single one of them who had ever heard of that country. The next day they hunted through all the books and all the maps, but there was no book or map which mentioned it.

"She is the most beautiful maiden I have ever seen!" cried the king. "I'd like to marry her, but how can I ever see her again if I can't find out the location of the land she comes from!"

He was in deep despair, and every one in the royal palace was nearly distracted. It was decidedly embarrassing to have the king fall in love with

a stranger from a country nobody could find on a map or in a book.

When the king returned from the feast he saw the ugly little maid he had hired busy at her work about the palace. The next day she again asked the queen's permission to go to the feast that night.

"Ask my son," was the queen's reply.

When Linda Branca asked the king's permission, he replied: "Look out or I'll hit you with my hairbrush."

That night Linda Branca again removed her ugly mask and dressed herself in the beautiful gown of blue embroidered in gold. She was even lovelier than the night before.

When she entered the grand ball room the king was almost wild with joy. He ran to her side at once and kept dancing with her the entire evening.

"What country do you come from?" he asked again.

"I'm from the land of the hairbrush," replied Linda Branca.

"Where is that land?" asked the king, but Linda Branca would not tell him.

"Where is the land of the hairbrush?" asked the king of the queen mother, and of all the wise men of the court.

Nobody could tell him, and nobody could find the land of the hairbrush upon any map or in any book.

"Stupid ones!" cried the king. "I don't believe you have half tried to find it!"

He looked through all the maps and books himself and at last he grew ill from so much studying. His friends all gathered about him in the royal bedchamber and sought to console him. However he refused consolation.

"I do not care whether I live or die!" he cried. "I care for nothing except the beautiful stranger who came to my feast."

Linda Branca knew that the king was ill, and when these words were reported to her she quickly dressed herself in the robe of blue trimmed with silver, which she had worn the first night of the feast. When she took off her ugly mask and looked at herself in the glass she was really pleased with her reflection.

"It is not so bad after all to be pretty," she said as she smiled.

Linda Branca stole out of the palace and peeped into the window of the royal bedchamber. One of the king's counsellors saw her.

"Whose lovely face is that at the window?" he asked.

"It is surely the beautiful stranger from the land of the boot," said one.

"It is the charming maiden from the land of the hairbrush," disputed another.

By the time the king himself had reached the window there was no one to be seen. He called for the queen, his mother.

"Tell me, mother, who was outside my window a moment ago?" he asked.

"No one unless a masquerader," replied the queen.

The poor queen was nearly worn out with worry over her son. She was afraid he was so sick that he was going to die.

The next day the king had in truth grown most decidedly worse. The court physicians went about with anxious faces and the whole palace had become a place of deepest gloom.

Linda Branca put on her dress of blue embroidered with gold and again peeped into the window of the royal bedchamber.

Now the king had lain upon his richly carved bed with his eyes fixed every moment upon the window where the face had appeared. He did not close his eyes at all.

"He can't live long if this keeps up," one court physician whispered to another.

He had just finished saying these words when the king gave a loud cry and sprang from his bed. He ran to the window and reached it just in time to catch a piece of the skirt of blue embroidered in gold. He held it tight.

"Masquerader, unmask!" he cried.

Linda Branca had hastily put on the mask which she had brought with her, and now she looked up at the king with the face of the little servant he had hired. She took off the mask and smiled into his eyes.

"Now at last I know who is the beautiful stranger from the land of the boot and the land of the hairbrush!" cried the king.

When Linda Branca had told the king, the queen mother and all the courtiers her whole story everybody laughed.

"Who ever before heard of a maiden who wanted to be less beautiful than Nature had made her!" cried the wise men.

"I always knew that when my son saw fit to select his bride he would choose a rare woman," said the queen mother proudly.

The king himself did not say a single word, but gazed and gazed at the lovely face of Linda Branca with such joy in his eyes that she knew in her heart that at last she was glad to be beautiful.

"Stay pretty," is a parting greeting between women in the Azores. Perhaps it was Linda Branca herself who began saying it in the beginning.

FRESH FIGS

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The Story of a Clever Youth and a Foolish One

Long ago there lived a little maid who fell ill. Her father was very rich and he did everything he could for her.

One day she said: "If I only had some fresh figs I'm sure I'd feel better."

Now it was in the month of January. It would be many long months before the fresh figs would be ripe. The rich man was greatly worried. Not even his fortune could ripen the figs, as he well knew.

Nevertheless he decided to advertise and therefore said: "Whoever shall bring fresh figs to my daughter shall marry her if he be young. If he be old he shall receive his reward in money."

This announcement was spread abroad throughout the whole country, but no one had any fresh figs in the month of January. At last, however, there was a woman found who had a fig tree close by the side of her house, protected from the cold winds by the house and by the high wall of her garden. This woman had a few fresh figs, but they were small and not very good.

"Send them to the little maid who is sick," advised her neighbors.

"Indeed I'll send them as soon as my son can get ready to start," replied the good woman.

Now the woman had two sons. One of them was foolish, but the other was considered one of the cleverest youths in the whole countryside. He left home immediately with the best of the figs in his basket.

On the way he met a woman dressed in blue with a child in her arms. It was really the Holy Mother and her Child but he did not recognize them.

"What are you carrying in your basket?" asked the woman.

"I am carrying horns," replied the clever youth.

"Yes, you are carrying horns," replied the woman.

The young man went on to the rich man's house supposing that he was carrying figs in his basket just as when he started out. The basket had grown heavy.

"What have you in your basket?" asked the rich man when he saw the youth at his door.

"I have brought some fresh figs from my garden to your daughter who is ill," replied the clever one.

The rich man was delighted. He opened the basket. Then he shook the boy roughly by the collar and pushed him away down the steep steps. There were horns in the basket.

"What do you mean by playing such a trick on me?" called the rich man after him. "Never let me see your face in these parts again!"

There were still a few of the poorest of the fresh figs remaining on the tree. The foolish son begged his mother for permission to carry them to the little maid who was sick.

"Yes. Go with them," replied his mother. "Who knows but what you may wed the rich man's daughter!" She laughed as she said it.

The boy who was foolish started for the rich man's house with the figs in his basket. They were only a very few, and poor little things indeed.

On the way he met a woman dressed in blue with a child in her arms.

"What are you carrying in your basket?" asked the woman.

"Fresh figs for a little maid who is sick," replied the boy.

"Yes, you are carrying figs," said the woman.

The boy opened his basket. "Here, take one for the baby," he said. "He's a lovely child."

He gave one of the best figs to the baby and went on his way to the rich man's house.

"What have you in your basket?" asked the rich man.

"Fresh figs from my garden for your daughter who is sick," replied the boy.

The rich man opened the basket with a scowl upon his face. He well remembered how he had been tricked before. Then his eyes grew wide with surprise.

"What, figs like these in January!" he cried in amazement.

The figs had grown large and beautiful on the road to the rich man's house. They filled the whole basket. The little maid was so happy when she saw them that she began to grow better immediately.

When her father saw that the youth was foolish, he repented of his promise to give his daughter in marriage to any young man who brought fresh figs to her. However, he had given his word and it was not a thing to be lightly broken.

"I'll tell you what to do to get out of your difficulty," said his friend to whom he told his trouble. "Turn two lively rabbits out on the mountain and tell the boy that he'll lose his life if he doesn't catch them and bring them back at night."

That is exactly what the rich man did. The poor youth tried in vain to catch the rabbits. He got very tired and hot; and, foolish as he was, he knew enough to realize that the task set for him was quite impossible.

Suddenly he saw the woman dressed in blue standing before him with the child in her arms.

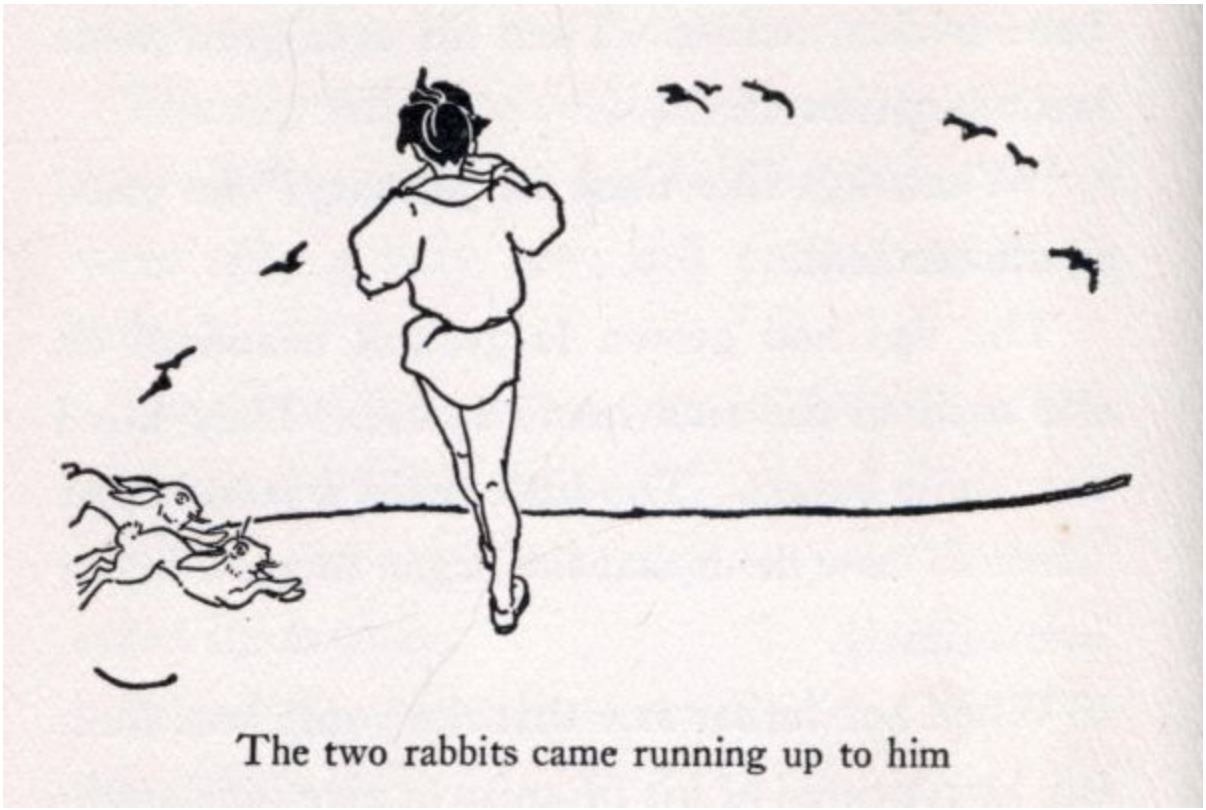
"What is the matter?" she asked him.

The boy told her how he would lose his life if he did not catch the rabbits and bring them back to the rich man at nightfall.

The woman cut a reed and made a pipe of it.

"Play on this pipe," she said, "and the rabbits will come back to you of their own accord."

The youth played such sweet music on his pipe that the two rabbits came running up to him immediately. It was all he could do to keep away the other beasts and birds. Everything which heard the music was charmed by it.



The two rabbits came running up to him

On his way back to the rich man's house he met two men who had been sent to kill him. No one had dreamed, of course, that he'd really catch the rabbits. The two men were so surprised when they saw them in the bag that their eyes stuck out. The rich man was even more amazed.

As for the little maid who had been sick, when she heard the sweet music which the youth played upon the pipe, she was quite ready to marry him. The wedding was celebrated with great joy.

PETER-OF-THE-PIGS

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The Story of a Sharp Lad and a Sharper

Long ago there lived a man who employed a boy to take care of his pigs. The lad's name was Peter and he was commonly called by every one in the countryside Peter-of-the-pigs.

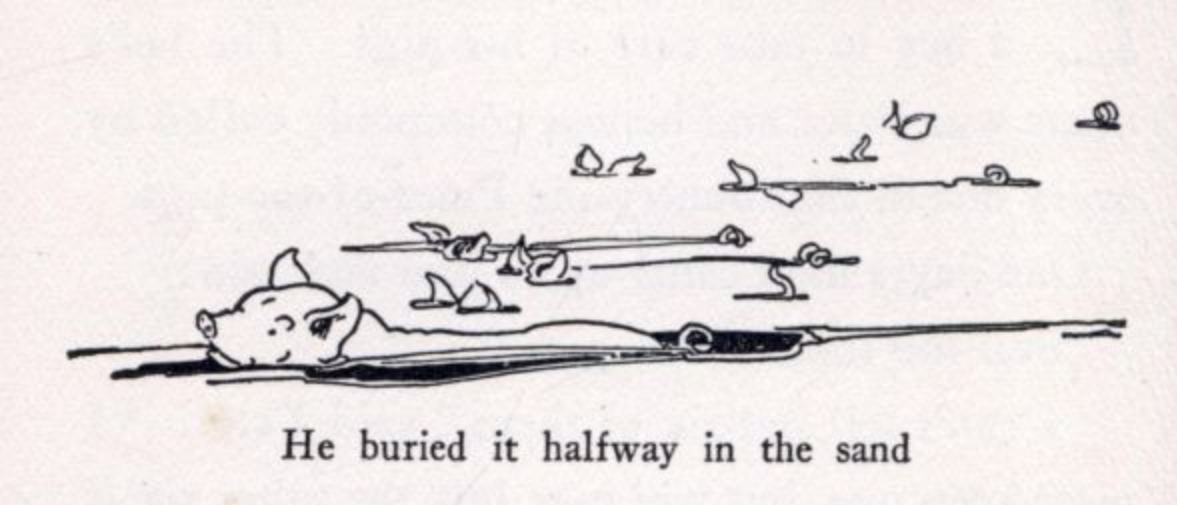
One day a man came up to him and said:

"Sell me these seven pigs."

"I can't sell but six of them," said Peter. "I must keep one, but you may buy the other six if you will cut off their tails and ears and leave them for me."

The man promised to do this, and the boy pocketed the money. The six pigs looked sad enough without their tails and ears as they were driven away by their new master.

Peter led his one remaining pig down to the sand pit. He buried it halfway in the sand. He buried the tails and ears of the other six pigs, too, so that part of them stuck out. Then he ran with all speed for his master.



He buried it halfway in the sand

"Come and help me get the pigs out of the sand pit!" he called out.

His master ran as fast as he could to the sand pit. There he saw one of the pigs halfway out of the sand. He and Peter together soon pulled it out completely. Then he took hold of the tail nearby. To his horror it appeared to break off in his hand.

"Run to the house and ask my wife to give you two shovels!" cried the owner of the pigs. "With the shovels we can dig out the rest of the pigs."

The boy ran to the house. He knew that his master kept his money in two big bags.

"My master says that you shall give me his two money bags," said Peter to his mistress.

The woman did not approve of doing this. "Are you sure he said both of them?" she asked.

"Yes, both of them," said Peter. "Go ask him yourself."

Accordingly, the woman ran out of the house.

"Did you say both of them?" she called to her husband.

"Yes, both of them," he replied. "Be quick about it, too."

Of course the poor man thought that she was asking about the two shovels which he had sent Peter to get.

Thus Peter received his master's two bags of money, and set out into the world with the bags on his shoulder and his pockets full of the money he had obtained from the sale of the six pigs.

After a time Peter-of-the-pigs met a robber. The robber stole one of his money bags and ran away with it. Peter ran after him.

Now it happened that the robber had just killed a deer. He was carrying the liver inside his blouse. As he ran he threw it back so that he could run faster. Peter saw what he had done.

"If you want to catch me, you'll have to throw away your liver, too," called out the robber over his shoulder.

Peter-of-the-pigs pulled out his knife and cut out his liver. Of course he dropped dead at once.

When at last Peter's master found out that he had been deceived he ran after the lad. As he found him lying dead there by the wayside, he said:

"Oh, Peter-of-the-pigs! You were sharp, but you found some one who was sharper."

Thus it is in life.

THE PRINCESS WHO LOST HER RINGS

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The Story the Lame Old Women Told

Long ago there lived a lovely princess who owned the most beautiful rings in the whole world. She had rings set with diamonds and rings set with pearls. She had rings set with rubies and rings set with sapphires. She had rings set with emeralds and turquoises and amethysts and every other kind of precious stone. She had rings which had no precious stones in them, but which were wonderfully decorated with fine and delicate carving, wrought with great skill.

This princess lived in a magnificent palace surrounded by a high wall. Her own apartments opened upon a pleasant balcony. From the balcony she could see the blue waters of the ocean and the tall trees of the forest. Here she liked to pass her days.

In a corner of the balcony there was a basin and pitcher of silver always kept filled with water in order that the princess might wash her hands on the balcony instead of having to go inside the house. Whenever she washed her hands she always removed the ring she was wearing that day. Some days it was one ring and other days it was another, but, whatever ring it happened to be, the princess always took it off carefully when she washed her hands.

One day a pretty white rabbit came up to the balcony to play with the princess. That day the princess was wearing her best diamond ring. She removed it very carefully when she washed her hands. Then it disappeared. She knew that the rabbit must have stolen it.

The next day the rabbit came again and that day the princess lost her best emerald ring. She was very sure that the rabbit must have stolen that,

too. However, she liked to play with the rabbit, so she said nothing to her father, the king, about the lost rings.

Every day the rabbit came and every day there was a ring missing. The princess had a large box full of rings, in the beginning, but one morning she opened the box and saw that it was entirely empty. She remembered then that she had put on her last ring, one set with a sapphire, the morning before.

The princess became so sad that she would not go out to the balcony to play with the white rabbit. Every day she grew sadder and sadder. At last her father, the king, noticed it.

"What is the matter with our daughter, the princess?" he asked the queen. "She is sad now, and once she was the very jolliest, happiest princess in the whole world."

"I cannot imagine what the trouble is," replied the queen. "Perhaps she is lonely. Let us send for the storytellers of the kingdom to come and tell their stories to entertain her."

Accordingly, the king sent for all the storytellers in the whole kingdom. All the storytellers had to come to the palace even if they were old and lame.

Now it so happened that in the kingdom there were two old women who were very lame. They knew the most interesting stories of anybody, but it took them so long to reach the palace that they forgot all their best stories on the way.

"What story are you going to tell the princess?" one of the lame old women asked the other.

"I can't remember a single one of my stories," said the other old woman. "It has taken my lame old legs so long to travel the road to the palace that now that we are almost there I can't think of a single story."

The two old women tried to remember some of their stories, but they could not think of any. They were almost at the royal palace, too.

"What shall we do if we can't remember our stories?" asked the first old woman.

"We'll have to learn some new stories," replied the other.

Just then they spied a queer sight. There was a little donkey without any feet traveling along the road. On his back was a load of wood.

"What a queer donkey!" cried the first old woman.

"Let us follow along after him. Perhaps we shall be able to tell a story about him," replied the other.

The two old women followed the donkey into the forest. There was a little thatched-roofed house in the forest and before the house there was a fire burning. A kettle of something which smelled good was boiling merrily over the fire.

The donkey which had no feet stopped beside the fire and left his load of wood. The two old women stopped beside the fire, too.

"What do you suppose is cooking in this kettle?" asked one of the old women.

"It smells so good I'm going to taste and see," said the other.

She started to taste, but as she was about to stick in her finger she heard a strange deep voice which seemed to come out of the little thatched house.

"Do not touch. It is not yours," is what the voice said.

The two old women went up to the door of the house and one of them peeped through the keyhole.

Inside the house she saw a pretty white rabbit playing with a box full of rings. Suddenly the white rabbit pulled off his skin and changed into a handsome prince.

"What wouldn't I give to see the owner of these rings!" cried the prince.

The two lame old women hurried away from the little house in the forest. They were frightened at the queer doings there.

"I know a story to tell the princess!" cried one of the old women when she had recovered from her fright. "I'll tell her how I peeped through the keyhole and saw the rabbit change his skin."

"I know what I'll tell the princess," said the other old woman. "I'll tell her how I followed the donkey without any feet and what that strange voice said to me when I tried to taste the good-smelling broth in the kettle."

"We must keep saying over our stories so we won't forget them," said the first old woman.

"We must hurry on our way to the royal palace and get there while we remember them," said the other.

The two old women hurried on their way to the palace as fast as their lame old legs could carry them. They rehearsed their stories over and over along the way so they would not forget them.

Many storytellers had told their tales to the princess. They were jolly tales, too, but the princess was not in the least cheered by them. She remembered her lost rings even when she was listening to the stories.

"If the storytellers cannot make the princess happy, who can?" asked the king in despair.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied the queen. "She always used to like stories."

Finally the two old women reached the royal palace and went to tell their tales to the princess.

The first old woman told the story of the donkey without any feet and the broth in the kettle. The princess did not appear to be particularly interested even when the old woman told about the strange deep voice which said, "Do not touch. It is not yours." Cold chills, however, ran up and down the spines of the king and queen and all the courtiers when she came to that part of the tale.

Next the other old woman told how she peeped through the keyhole of the little thatched house in the forest and saw the white rabbit change his skin.

The pretty dark eyes of the princess sparkled when the old woman mentioned the rabbit and she leaned forward in her chair eagerly.

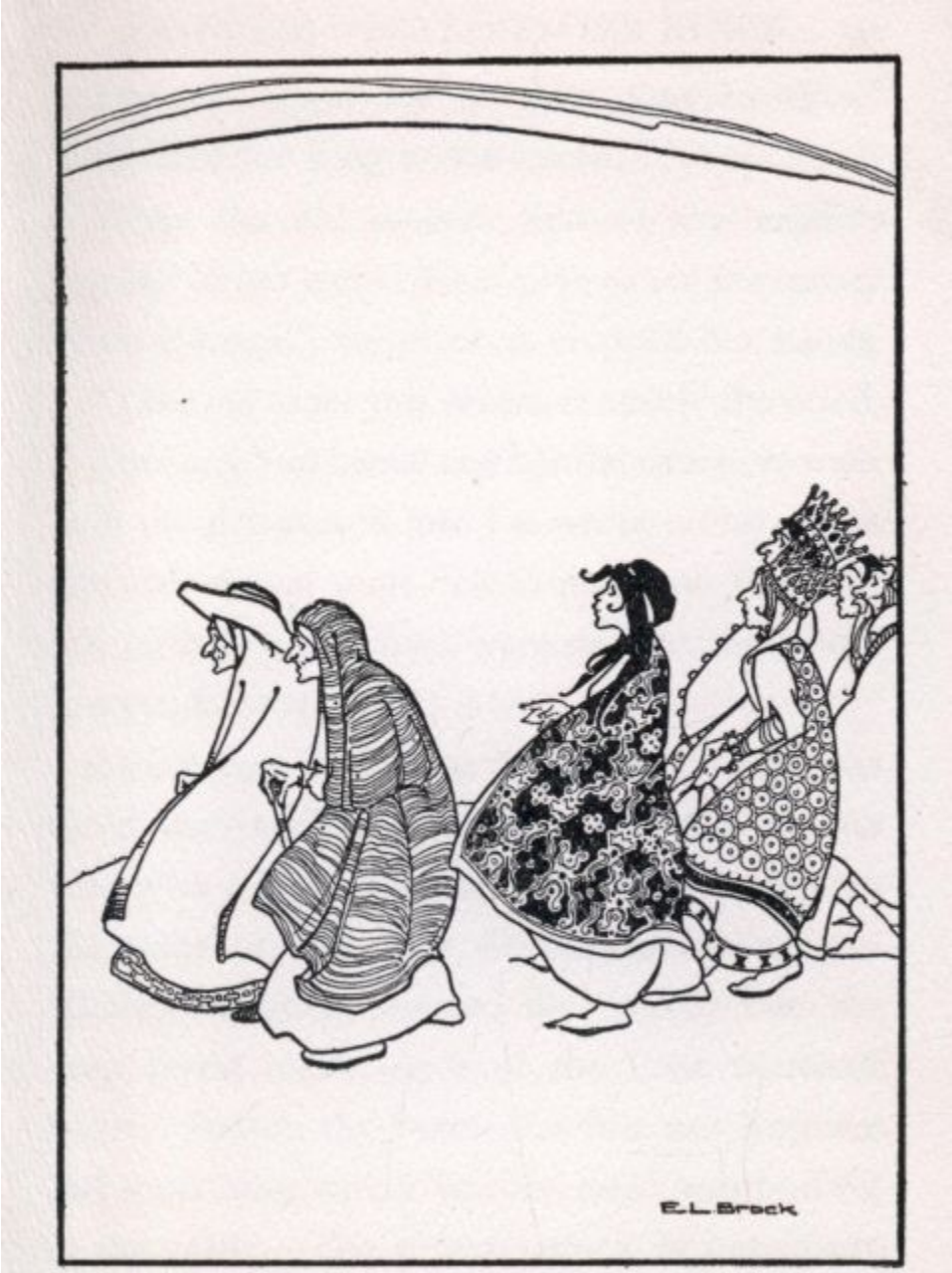
"Our dear little princess looks like her own happy self again for the first time in ages," whispered the king to the queen.

When the old woman told of the rabbit's words, "What would I not give to see the owner of these rings!" the princess clapped her hands.

"Take me to see this rabbit at once!" she cried.

The king and queen and all the courtiers went with the princess to find the white rabbit. The two old women went first to point out the way, and as these old women were so lame the whole procession moved very slowly.

At last they drew near the forest. There was the donkey without any feet moving along the road with a load of wood on his back. The two old women, the princess, the king and queen and all the courtiers followed the donkey into the deep forest to the door of the little thatched house. Before the house the fire was burning and something which smelled good was boiling in the kettle. The princess stuck in her finger to try it.



The two old women, the princess, the king and queen, and all the courtiers followed

The two old women, the princess, the king and queen, and all the courtiers followed

"Take it. It is yours," said the strange deep voice from the little house.

The princess was so surprised that she forgot to taste the good-smelling broth. She ran to the door of the house and peeped through the keyhole. There was the white rabbit playing with a box full of rings set with diamonds and pearls, rings set with rubies and sapphires, rings set with emeralds and amethysts and turquoises, and rings set with no precious stones at all, but carved delicately, with great skill.

"What wouldn't I give to see the owner of these rings!" said the rabbit as he pulled off his skin and changed into a handsome prince.

"Here's the owner of the rings!" cried the princess. "She is here at your very door!"

The door of the little thatched house in the deep forest swiftly opened and the prince received the princess in his arms.

"Your words have broken my enchantment!" he cried. "Now that at last the voice of the owner of these rings is heard at my door, I'll never have to put on my rabbit skin again."

THE MASTER OF MAGIC

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The Story of a Boy who Learned His Lessons in School

Once upon a time there lived a man who had three sons. The two older ones worked in the fields, but the youngest one went to school. He learned how to read and write and do sums and make drawings. At last he even learned magic.

The two elder brothers complained to their father about him one day. Their hearts were bitter against him.

"It is not fair, father," they said. "We work hard every day in the fields and bring home money to enrich the family. Why shouldn't our brother work, too? He does nothing except study."

The youngest son heard their words of complaint.

"Will you go hunting with me to-morrow, father?" he asked. "I have learned much magic. In fact, I have become a master of magic. I will turn myself into a hunting dog if you will go into the fields with me."

The next day the young man changed himself by magic into a hunting dog, and his father went into the fields with him. He bagged many rabbits that day. As they returned home, he met one of his friends.

"What luck to-day?" asked his friend.

The hunter proudly displayed the rabbits he had in his bag. "I have them, thanks to my dog," he said.

"I'd like to buy that dog of yours," said his friend. "What will you take for him?"

The father named an enormous price, and to his great surprise his friend accepted it. The money was passed over at once, and the hunting dog went home with his new master.

The next day they went on a hunting expedition into the deep forest. Suddenly the dog disappeared. His master called and whistled to him in vain. Finally he was obliged to return home without him. He had lost both the dog and the money he had paid for him.

"Have you seen my hunting dog?" were his words for many weeks to every one he met.

His hunting dog had fled into a deep forest and once more resumed his original form. He returned home and told his two brothers that in a single

day he had earned for his father more than their combined efforts for many weeks. Indeed it was quite true.

The next day the young man said to his father: "Will you buy a saddle and bridle for me if I turn myself into a horse?"

His father made the purchase, and then the young man changed into a handsome black horse. His father rode him up and down the streets very proudly. The Great Magician noticed the beautiful beast.

He called the man to him and said: "That is a very good horse you are riding. What will you sell him for?"

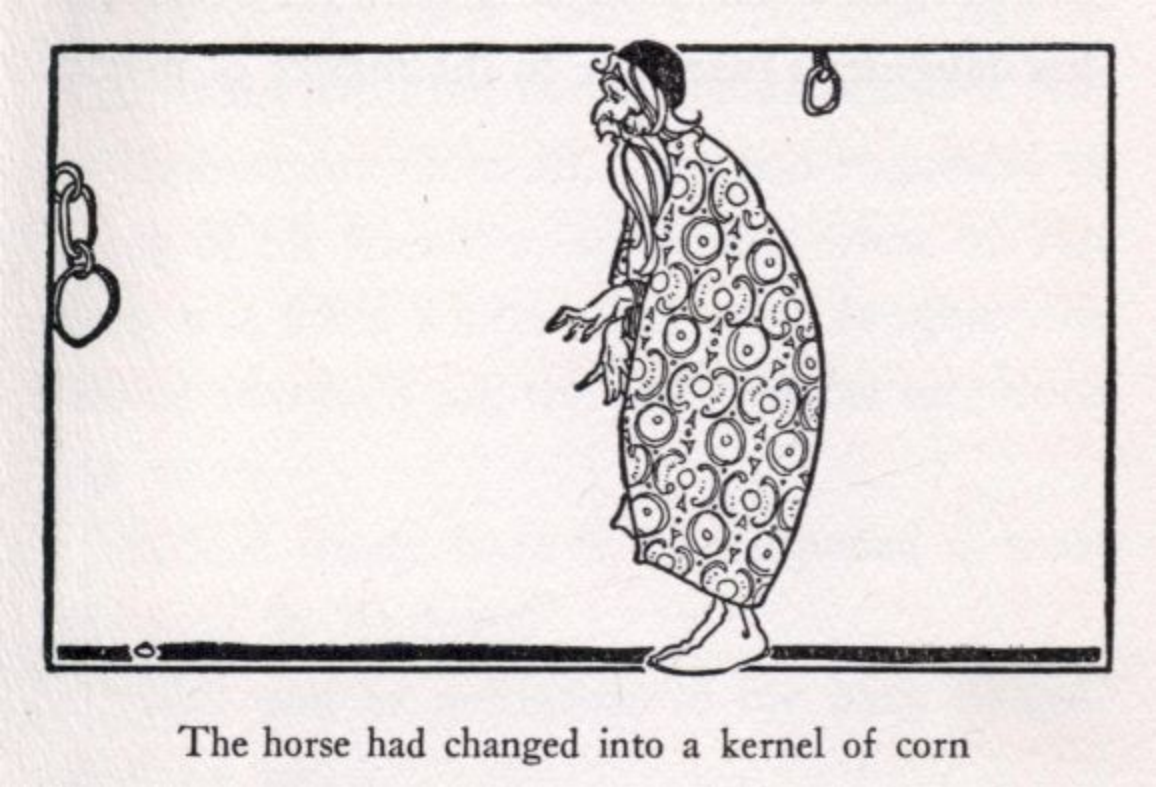
The father named an enormous price, but he at once paid it cheerfully. He ordered the horse placed in his stables.

Now this Great Magician had a beautiful daughter who was very fond of horses. She went out to inspect his new purchase as soon as it was brought home. She noticed that the horse ate nothing.

"What a beauty!" she cried as she stroked his glossy black coat. "You are the handsomest horse in the stable. Why don't you eat? I believe your bridle is hurting you. I'm going to take it off."

As soon as the bridle was removed it was changed into a bird and flew out the window. The Great Magician at that moment changed himself into a hawk and killed the bird, never dreaming that it was the bridle of the new horse he had purchased.

The next morning when the Great Magician went to mount his beautiful black steed there was no new horse to be found in the stable. The horse had changed into a kernel of corn.



The horse had changed into a kernel of corn

The horse had changed into a kernel of corn

The Great Magician transformed himself into a hen to eat up the corn, but the youth was too quick for him. He changed into a dog and seized the hen between his teeth and gave it a good shaking. Then he returned to his own form and explained the whole affair to the Great Magician.

"You are surely a master of magic," was the comment of the magician.

When the Great Magician had forgiven him for the shaking he had received when he was in the form of a hen, he gladly gave his consent to his daughter's marriage to the master of magic.

ST. ANTHONY'S GODCHILD

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The Story of Antonia who became a King's Page

Long ago there lived a man who had so many children that he could scarcely find godfathers for them all. He had requested so many of his friends to serve, that when his last baby was born, a little dark-eyed daughter, he vowed that he'd ask the first man he met upon the street.

As luck would have it, he happened to meet the good St. Anthony.

"Will you be godfather to my baby daughter?" he asked.

Kind St. Anthony gladly consented. He named the baby Antonia, and said to the father:

"Train up this child in the way she should go. Teach her all you can. When she is thirteen years old I'll come to get her and I'll give her a good start in life."

The years flew by and soon little Antonia was thirteen years old. The father was afraid that St. Anthony had forgotten his promise, but one day the saint appeared.

"Is this my godchild?" he asked as he looked at Antonia. "Surely she has grown prettier each year of her life."

Antonia blushed shyly and looked even more attractive than before.

"Dress yourself in your brother's garments," he said to her. "I am going to take you to the king's court and you are entirely too pretty to go there in your own dresses."

Accordingly, Antonia put on her brother's clothes and went to serve as a page to the king. She was now called Anthony instead of Antonia.

Now the king had a sister who grew very fond of the little page. She became angry that the page did not love her in return and plotted against him.

One day she went to the king and said:

"Your little page says that he can separate all the chaff from the wheat in a single night."

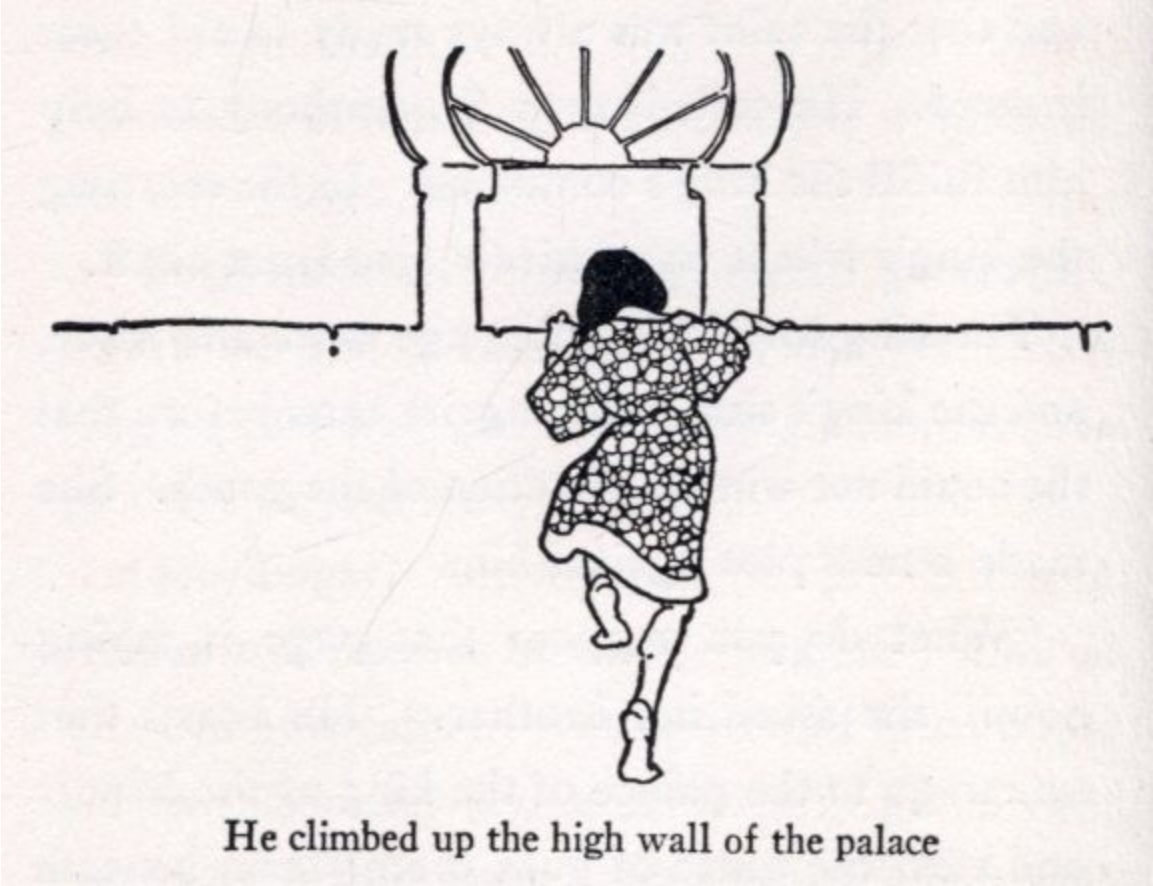
"Let him try," responded the king.

When Anthony heard what the king required he was decidedly worried. Then he remembered that he was the godchild of St. Anthony and that the saint was always ready to aid those in need. He called upon St. Anthony to help him fulfill the king's command. In the morning the king's wheat was entirely free from chaff.

The king loved his little page more and more, and the king's sister was angrier than before that she could not win the affection of the youth. She made a new plot against him.

"What do you suppose that page is saying now?" she asked her brother. "He boasts that he can go to the palace of the king of the Moors and steal the purse of gold pieces from beneath his pillow."

The king sent Anthony to the palace of the king of the Moors. With St. Anthony's help he climbed up the high wall of the palace and crept in through a window. The king of the Moors was so sound asleep that Anthony had no difficulty whatever in slipping his hand under the pillow and stealing the purse. Then he crept out again without awakening the king.



He climbed up the high wall of the palace

"That young page, Anthony, has grown so very boastful," remarked the king's sister a few days after his return, "that he now claims that he can carry away the king of the Moors himself."

Then she added, "I'll marry him if he fulfills this boast."

"Bring home the king of the Moors as your captive," were the king's orders to Anthony.

The page was very much worried for he thought that it would be more difficult to capture the king of the Moors than it had been to capture his purse.

"Not at all, dear godchild," said the kind St. Anthony when he had heard about the king's new command.

Anthony climbed quietly up the wall as before and crept in through the window. Then he rolled the king of the Moors up in the bedclothes and tossed him out of the window. By the time the king was really awakened from his sleep he was in the boat ready to sail away.

When Anthony returned to the palace with his captive, the king said:

"My best and bravest page, you are worthy indeed of any honor. You shall wed my sister."

"I can't marry her," said Anthony. "My name is Antonia."

"In that case," said the king, "I'll marry you myself."

TROUBLE WHEN ONE'S YOUNG

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The Story of a Maid's Choice

Long ago there lived a beautiful maiden whose name was Clarinha. She had been betrothed to a prince whom she had never seen. When at last he should be old enough to receive the rule of the kingdom he was coming to claim her as his bride.

Clarinha lived in a magnificent palace surrounded by a beautiful garden. Every day she spent many hours among the lovely flowers and trees.

One day an eagle alighted on the tallest tree in the garden.

"Good morning, fair Clarinha," he said to her.

"Good morning," she replied in surprise. Never before had an eagle spoken to her.

"Which do you prefer, trouble when you are young or when you are old?" asked the eagle.

Clarinha did not know what to say. That night she asked her mother which would be better to choose.

"Choose trouble when you're young, dear child," advised her mother. "When you are young it is easy to bear anything, but when you are old you can endure nothing."

She remembered her mother's words. Next day when the eagle again addressed the same question to her, she answered: "Trouble when I'm young."

Clarinha had hardly said these words when the eagle lifted her up by the pink skirt she was wearing and carried her away. On he flew over seas and mountains. Clarinha was frightened nearly to death.

At last the eagle set her down in a strange land. She was hungry, and, accordingly, hired out in a bakeshop to earn her living. She would have been happier if the eagle had flown away, but he remained in a nearby tree-top.

The baker went out, leaving Clarinha to bake the dough which he had left ready to put into the oven. The little maid carefully closed the door and all the windows so that the eagle would not be able to get inside. As soon as the baker was out of sight, however, he flew down the chimney. He tore about the bakeshop, spilling all the dough on the floor and breaking the dishes. Then he went back up the chimney when he had completed all the damage there was to be done.

When the baker returned he flew into a terrible rage. He gave poor Clarinha a beating and turned her out into the street.

She walked about the city and at last found work as shopkeeper in a little shop on a corner. The owner of the business went away next day, leaving her in charge of everything. As soon as he was gone she shut the door and all the windows, but the eagle flew down the chimney and broke the cups and glasses and plates which were set out for sale in neat rows upon the shelf.

"What have you been doing in my shop?" cried the owner in anger when he returned and saw the destruction which the eagle had left behind.

He didn't give the poor girl a chance to reply, but seized her roughly and threw her out into the street.

Clarinha walked and walked seeking work, and at last she arrived at the door of the royal palace.

"Do you happen to need a servant?" she asked the queen.

"I have all the servants I need," replied the queen.

The prince was standing nearby.

"Hire her, mother," he advised. "She'll do to take care of the ducks."

Accordingly, the queen hired Clarinha to care for the ducks. The next morning all the ducks in the royal duckyard were dead. The eagle had killed them all.

"Hire her for a seamstress, mother," said the prince. "The poor little thing is crying as if her heart would break. I'm sorry for her."

The queen hired Clarinha to be a seamstress in the royal palace.

That very day the prince left home to visit his betrothed. He was going to marry a beautiful maiden in a neighboring land, whom he had never seen. As he left the palace he asked each one of the servants what gifts he should bring at his return.

When he came to Clarinha, her reply was, "Bring me a stone from the palace wall of your betrothed."

The prince thought it a strange request, but he promised to fulfill it.

As soon as the prince arrived in the land where his betrothed lived, he found out that the palace was in mourning because of her mysterious disappearance one day from the garden.

He was so sad that he could not linger in that land. He stayed only long enough to buy the gifts which he had promised to bring to the servants. Along with the other gifts he carried a stone from the palace garden of his betrothed.

When Clarinha received her gift she heard the story of the mysterious disappearance of the prince's bride. As soon as she held the stone in her hand she knew that it came from the wall of her own loved garden. Joy shone in her beautiful eyes.

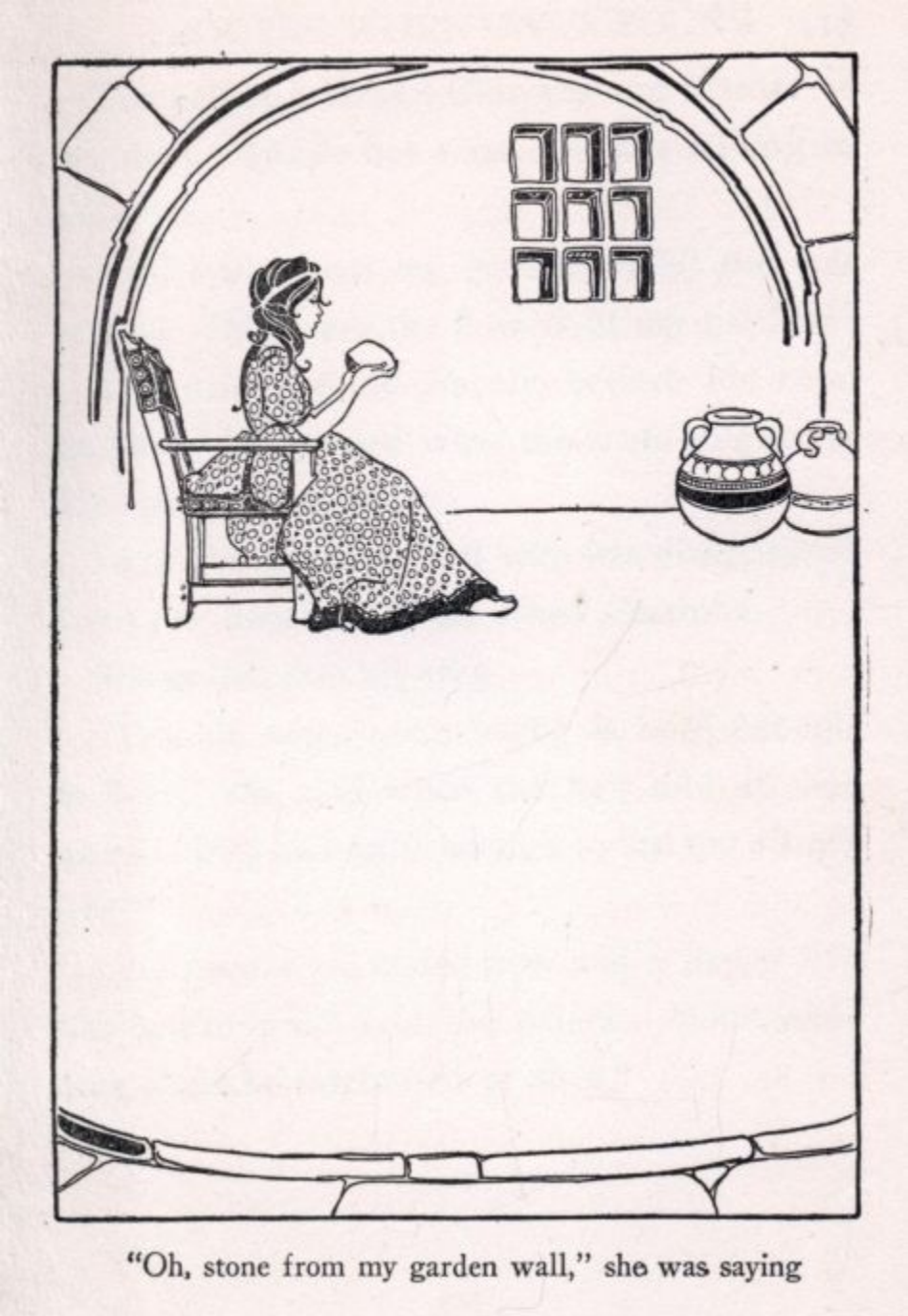
For the first time the prince noticed how very lovely Clarinha was. He had always liked the little maid even when her face was sad, but now that she was happy he saw that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

"What does that pretty little maid intend to do with that stone?" he asked the queen.

"I cannot guess," replied the queen. "She seemed happy enough to receive it. I never saw her look happy before. Trouble seems to follow whatever she undertakes. I was on the point of discharging her. She's caused me nothing but endless annoyance. I hired her only to please you."

The prince followed Clarinha and listened at her door. Inside her room she was talking to the stone.

"Oh, stone from my garden wall," she was saying. "How are the flowers of my garden?"



"Oh, stone from my garden wall," she was saying

The prince could hardly believe his ears. Suddenly he guessed what the truth might be. He burst into the room.

"Are you my betrothed who has disappeared from her own land?" he asked Clarinha.

She smiled into his eyes.

"Trouble when one's young is hard enough to bear," she said when she had told all her story. "I've had quite enough to last me all my life."

"Your woes are ended now and a happy life lies before you," said the prince. "Our wedding shall be celebrated at once."

THE LITTLE MAID WHO WAS WISE

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The Story of a Robber Who was Outwitted

Long ago there lived a merchant who had three daughters. Every year at a certain day of a certain month he went away to a distant city to collect money on an account. His wife and daughters remained at home, and all went well until one sad day the wife died. That year the merchant looked forward to his journey with dread for he would have to leave his daughters alone.

"I cannot bear to go away," he said to them. "My heart is filled with fear lest some evil may befall you during my absence."

He worried about the matter night and day. The business was most important and there was no one whom he could send to transact it for him.

However, the question of leaving three such pretty girls unprotected was a thing not to be regarded lightly.

"Do not be afraid to leave us, dear father," said his daughters. "Nothing will harm us while you are away."

"How do you know?" asked their father. "I am older and wiser than you are and I know that there are many evils which might come upon you. There are many bold thieves in this city, for instance, who would be only too ready to take advantage of my absence and rob my home of all I possess."

"We can lock ourselves securely in the house and not let any one enter," said the three daughters.

"Be sure that you admit no one," commanded the merchant.

They gave him their promise and he started on his journey. Nevertheless, he went with an anxious heart.

Now, outside this city there was a band of bold robbers. The captain of the band had watched the merchant's departure, and when he was safely away the thief dressed himself in the disguise of an old beggar. When it was evening he led his band into a nearby street and in his disguise approached the merchant's house. He knocked at the door.

"Have pity upon a poor unfortunate one!" he called out. "It is raining outside, and no one with mercy in his heart could turn away one who begs shelter from the storm. Let me enter, I pray you, to pass the night under your roof."

"It's surely a terrible storm outside," said the merchant's eldest daughter, as the wind rattled the tiles of the roof and the rain beat in torrents against the doors and windows. "I think we ought to take pity on a poor beggar a night like this."

The second daughter peeped out of the window at the beggar.

"He is old as well as poor," she said. "Our father has always taught us to show mercy and kindness to the aged."

"Remember our promise to our father!" cried the youngest one. "We gave him our word that we would admit no one. We can give this poor beggar some alms and send him away with a blessing."

The eldest daughter frowned. "It is not for the youngest and most childish one of us to make the plans," she said.

The second daughter added. "We two are older and wiser than you are. It is for us to determine what shall be done. If we decide to show mercy to this poor beggar it is not for you to oppose it."

"Bui we should not forget our promise to our father!" cried the youngest daughter.

However, in spite of all she could say, the elder sisters opened the door and admitted the beggar. They led him into the kitchen to dry his clothes. Then they made ready a bed for him to sleep upon. They gave him his supper in the kitchen and then they ate their own.

"It is a fearful night to send away a beggar," said the eldest sister while they were eating.

"I am glad we have made him comfortable for the night," remarked the middle sister.

"I am thinking that our dear father would be anxious if he knew that we had broken our promise so easily," said the youngest sister.

"For shame!" cried the eldest.

"I don't think it was breaking our promise to show kindness to a poor old beggar," said the middle one.

"A promise is a promise, nevertheless," said the youngest.

While they were talking, the beggar had taken the apples which the girls were to eat for dessert and had sprinkled a sleeping powder over them. The two eldest ate their apples, but the youngest could not eat that night. She threw the apple away.

As soon as they had eaten, the girls went to their room, and the two eldest were overcome with sleep almost before they had time to get into bed. The youngest one was so frightened that she could not sleep a single wink.

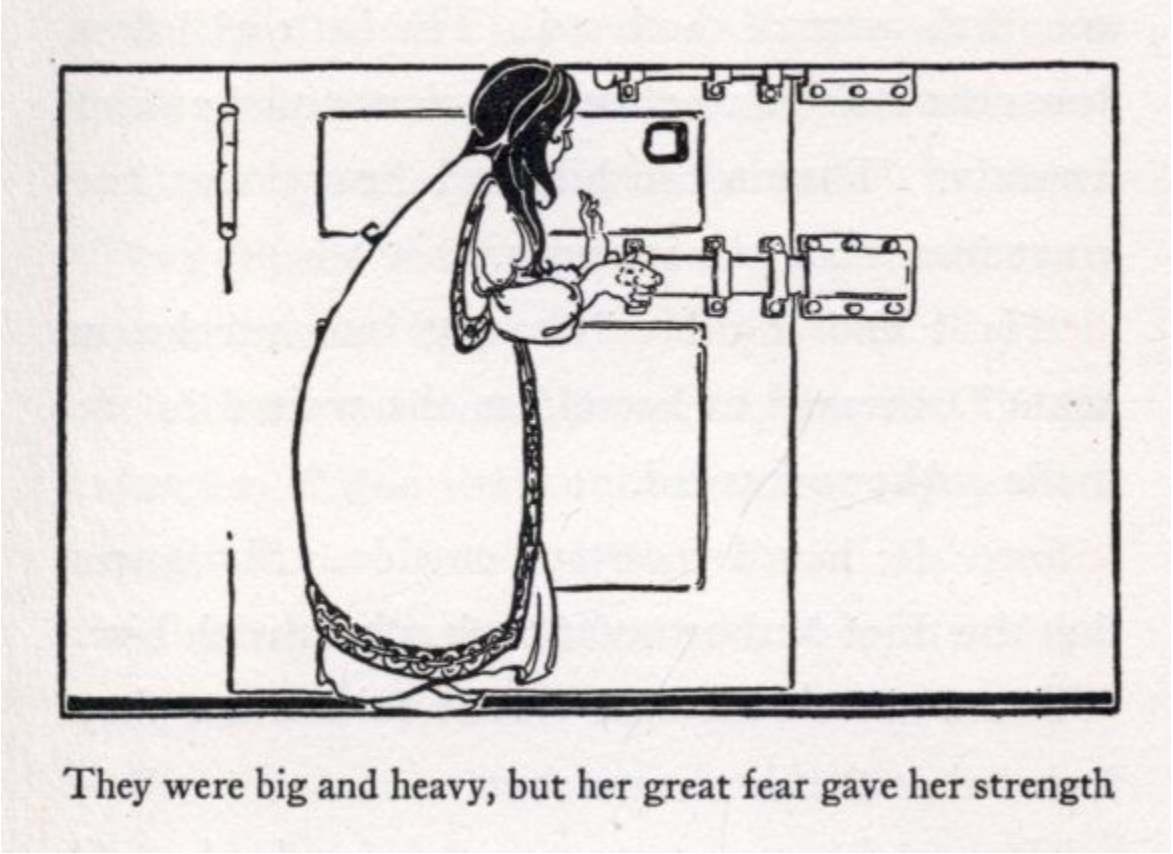
Soon she heard footsteps. The beggar entered the room. The youngest one pretended that she, too, was asleep. The man went to the bed of the eldest sister and stuck a pin into her foot to see if she were completely unconscious. She did not stir and he knew that the sleeping powder had thoroughly done its work. Then he went to the bed of the second sister and did the same. She was as completely unconscious as her sister. It hurt terribly when he stuck the pin into the foot of the youngest, but she did not stir. The robber thought that she was as completely overcome by the sleeping powder as the others.

The youngest sister peeped through her long heavy eyelashes and watched the beggar. She saw to her surprise that he had laid aside the heavy ragged old coat which he had kept wrapped about him even while he ate. Underneath he was dressed like a robber with a sword, pistols and dagger. She was so terribly frightened that it was all she could do to keep her teeth from chattering.

She heard the robber go about the house picking out the valuables which he wanted to steal. Then she heard him go down the stairway and unbolt the heavy doors which led into the store. She quietly got up and crept out of the room to hear him more distinctly.

On a chair in the dining room she saw the sword which he had taken off. He had evidently thought that, with all three girls so sound asleep, he'd not need to use his weapons.

Soon she heard the heavy outer doors of the store unbolted. The robber had gone outside to call the rest of the band. The little girl flew down the stairs and closed the doors of the store securely. They were big and heavy, but her great fear gave her strength.



They were big and heavy, but her great fear gave her strength

"He'll find it difficult to get into our house again," she said to herself as she waited to see if the robber returned.

Soon she heard footsteps outside. She knew that the thief had brought back others with him.

There were frightful words said when they found that the door was shut.

"It was the youngest one who deceived me!" cried the robber chieftain. "I knew all the time that she did not want to let me in. I was suspicious of her from the first."

"Perhaps you can outwit her yet!" cried another. "She may not be so wise as she appears. You never can tell."

The leader of the band of thieves went up close to the keyhole and whispered: "Kind lady of the house, have pity on me."

The merchant's daughter at first did not answer; but, as he kept on calling to her, she finally asked him what it was that he wanted.

"I have left my charm behind!" he cried. "Pray let me enter to get it. I promise you I will do you no harm."

"I do not trust your promises," replied the little maid. "You shall not come into my father's house."

"Pass the charm out to me, then," said the robber.

"It's in the fire," replied the girl.

"Go throw vinegar on the fire and put it out," said the captain of the thieves. "Then you can pull my charm out in safety."

Now it happened that there was a little hole in the door just large enough for a man's hand to enter. It is the hole through which beggars often thrust outstretched hands, asking for alms.

"Put your hand through the hole in the door," replied the little maid. "Then I'll give you your charm."

She quickly ran upstairs and got the robber's sword which he had left on a chair in the dining room. When she returned, his hand was sticking through the hole in the door. She struck it with all her might with the great sword and cut it off.

The cries and curses of the robbers filled the air. They tried in vain to break down the great doors. The doors were strong and held securely. At last it was daylight and the band of thieves had to flee.

In the morning the effect of the sleeping powder wore off and the two elder sisters awoke. When they heard their sister's story they were filled with amazement.

"I don't believe a word of it!" cried the oldest. "You are making it up."

"You had a bad dream," said the second. "I had such a nightmare myself that I have a headache this morning."

It was not until their little sister had shown them the robber's hand and the great sword that they were convinced that she had told them the truth.

"Oh, why did we ever let the man into our house!" cried the eldest.

"Oh, why didn't we keep our promise to our father!" cried the middle one.

When at last the merchant returned from the distant city where he had been to collect money he was delighted to find his house and his three daughters safe.

"I see that no harm befell you in my absence," he said as he embraced them fondly. "All my worries about you were foolish."

The eldest daughter blushed and hung her head. "Great danger threatened us while you were away," she said. "Thanks to our youngest sister, we are safe."

"Our little sister was wiser than we were," said the middle daughter.

When the merchant had heard the whole story, he said: "After this we must all give ear to the wisdom of this little maid. She is wise beyond her years."

MANOEL LITTLEBEAN

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The Story of How He Helped His Father

Long ago there lived a man and his wife who had no children.

"I wish I had a little boy," said the man.

"I'd like a son of my own even if he were not any larger than a little bean," said the woman.

Time passed and a son was born to this worthy couple. He was no larger than a little bean and as the years went by he never grew any bigger. His name was Manoel Littlebean. He caused his mother endless trouble by constantly getting lost. Sometimes she'd nearly step on him. Other times he'd fall into the food and she would almost swallow him.

One day his mother couldn't find him.

"Manoel Littlebean! Manoel Littlebean!" she called.

There was no answer.

She went outside the house and called his name anxiously. There was no reply. She asked all the neighbors if they had seen the child, but there was nobody who had noticed him that day. His poor mother was nearly wild with anxiety.

"I'm afraid I'll never see the dear child again," she mourned. "I'm sure I have either stepped on him or swallowed him!"

"You never stepped on him or swallowed him yet," comforted her husband. However, he added anxiously, "I can't see what has become of my Manoel."

The truth of the matter was that Manoel Littlebean had been swallowed by the goat. He was a most active youngster in spite of his small size and he caused the goat a terrible attack of indigestion.

The goat did not know what was the matter and he tore around so wildly and caused so much destruction that his master decided to kill him.

"I simply can't be bothered with that goat any longer," he said. "I have quite enough to worry about already with Manoel Littlebean lost and my poor wife nearly sick with anxiety because of it."

He never dreamed that it was his son who was making the goat so wild with misery. When the goat was dead he threw it out into the street.

That night a wolf came and ate the goat. He swallowed the goat's stomach so greedily that Manoel Littlebean had no time to escape. However he jumped about just as actively inside the wolf as he had done when the goat had swallowed him. The wolf was just as uncomfortable as the goat had been.

"What is the matter with me?" thought the wolf. "Never in my life have I had such a stomachache. I believe I'm going to die."

He ran away into the forest and crept into a cave to await his end. Inside the cave was a robbers' den. Three of the robbers were there counting over the gold they had just brought back.

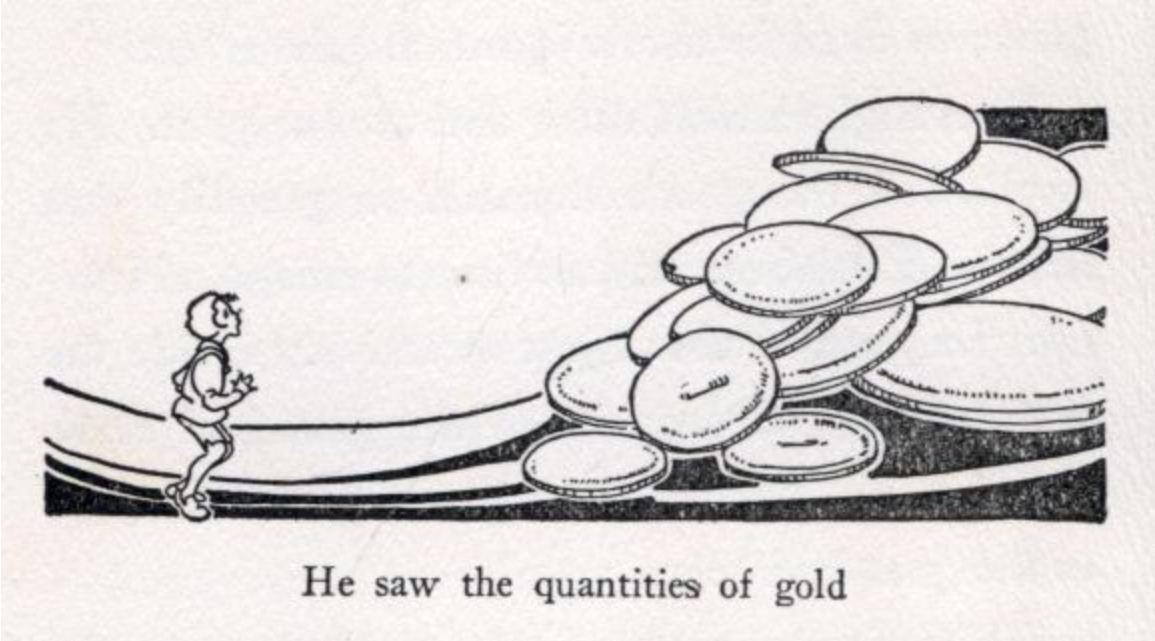
When they saw the wolf they were so frightened that they dropped their bags of gold and ran away as fast as they could, leaving everything behind them.

Manoel Littlebean guessed that he was making the wolf sick.

"If I can only make him so ill that he will spit me up!" said Manoel to himself as he jumped about his liveliest.

That is exactly what happened. The wolf spit Manoel Littlebean out.

He was decidedly dirty and unattractive, but he didn't mind in the least. He saw the quantities of gold in the robbers' cave and his eyes shone.



He saw the quantities of gold

"If I can only find my way home to tell my father about it, he will be a rich man!" he cried.

It was a long distance home and several times he thought that he had lost his way. Finally, however, he saw his own mother's light in the window. He ran toward it as fast as he could run.

"Manoel Littlebean, what have you been doing?" cried his mother when she saw him. "Where did you get so dirty? Come, let me give you a bath the first thing!"

"Never mind about the bath, mother," said Manoel. "I have more important things to attend to. Where is father?"

His mother called her husband and they both forgot how dirty the child was when they heard his story.

"Let us hurry to the robbers' cave, father," he said. "We must get there before they return."

"What about the wolf?" asked his mother anxiously.

Manoel Littlebean laughed.

"The wolf doesn't have any stomachache now," he said. "He went home long ago."

They went to the robbers' cave and brought home the huge sacks full of gold. It was enough to make them live like princes for a lifetime.

"I have the best and cleverest son in the world," said the father.

"Never in the world was there a son who was such a joy and comfort to his parents," said his mother.

Manoel Littlebean was treated by every one as politely as if he had been big.

THE NECKLACE OF PEARLS

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The Story of a Water-nymph and an Island Lad

In a tiny cottage on the steep rocky hillside of one of the islands of the Azores there lived a poor woman and her only son whose name was Francisco. Every day the boy went fishing in his little boat, and every night he brought home fish for his mother to cook for their evening meal and to carry into the market to sell. In this way they lived very comfortably, and they loved each other so dearly that they were as happy as happy can be.

Francisco, with his fair skin, blue eyes and thatch of curly golden hair, was the handsomest boy in the whole parish, and by the time he was sixteen years old there was many a rich man's daughter who had smiled upon him. However, the lad thought only of his fishing boat and his mother and did not notice the smiles.

One night the moon was so bright that Francisco could not sleep. He awakened his mother who was dozing comfortably in her bed.

"I'm going fishing, mother dear," he said as he kissed her. "The moonlight is calling me."

His mother started up from her bed in terror and amazement.

"Why, my boy, do you do such a thing as this?" she asked. "You have never been fishing in the night before. Some evil will surely befall you."

"Don't worry about me, dear mother," replied Francisco, laughing at her fears. "I know how to take care of myself. It is as light as day. Think how many fish I'll bring back for you to sell in the market to-morrow."

His mother shook her head anxiously, but, with another loving kiss, the lad ran out into the bright moonlight. He quickly launched his little fishing boat and soon was floating smoothly along on the peaceful waters of the bay which gleamed like a silver pathway in the moonlight. The soft air, the gentle rocking of the little boat, and the face of the moon upon which his blue eyes were fixed combined to send sleep to his eyelids. Soon he was nodding in the little boat. A few moments later and he was fast asleep. The moon's rays upon his curls made them shine as if they were indeed made of gold.

Now the village maidens were not the only ones who had noticed Francisco's blue eyes and handsome face. A water-nymph who dwelt in the depths of the sea had often observed him. In the daytime she was invisible to the eye of humans and so the lad had never seen her though she often spent long hours near him, never taking her eyes from his face.

"Here comes the beautiful youth in his little fishing boat!" cried the nymph as she saw the moonlight gleaming upon his bright curls. "At last my wish has come true. Now at night he'll be able to see me."

She hastily arranged her own beautiful hair before a little mirror she carried. Some of the strands of priceless pearls which decked her lovely head were a trifle awry. These and the necklaces of rare pearls which hung about her fair throat surrounded her with a gleam of soft light almost like the light of the moon. As she approached nearer to the little boat she saw that Francisco was fast asleep. She swam in the direction of the lad with all possible speed, a wild terror in her eyes.

"What madness is this?" she asked as she looked down upon his bowed head. "This frail boat will drift upon the dangerous rocks and be dashed to pieces. I'll take him home to my own palace without awakening him. Perhaps when he sees how lovely it is he'll even like me a little bit."

Just for a moment she hesitated, thinking how far from home Francisco would be in the palace of mother-of-pearl in the depths of the sea.

"The rocks are really very dangerous," she said to herself as she gently drew his sleeping form into her arms.

The next morning Francisco's empty fishing boat was found by the fishermen. For hours his mother had watched in vain for his return. When at last she heard that the empty boat had been found she was nearly wild with grief.

"He was the best son a mother ever had," she moaned over and over again. "How can I live without him!"

Indeed, as the days and weeks went by it was increasingly difficult for the poor woman to live. She not only missed her boy's loving smile, but she also missed the fish he caught so skillfully. There was little for the poor woman to eat if she had any appetite for food.

"Why don't you go to the Wiseman of the Sea and tell him your troubles?" asked one of the neighbors.

Francisco's mother knew that it was a long and difficult journey to reach the Wiseman of the Sea. She decided, however, it would be worth the effort just to gaze into his wise eyes. He knew so much, perhaps he would know how to say something to comfort her in her great sorrow and loneliness. She had shrugged her shoulders when her neighbor had spoken of it but she could not get the idea out of her mind. She knew that she would never rest in peace until she had made this journey. Accordingly, she launched Francisco's fishing boat, and, thanks to smooth seas, reached the little rocky island in the midst of the sea where the Wiseman of the Sea lived.

His tall form was outlined above the cliff even as she tied her little boat. He was very tall, far taller than anybody she had ever seen, and his snow-white beard fell to his feet. He was clothed in fish scales which gleamed in the sunlight.

"Well, little mother, what can I do for you to-day?" he asked, as she came up the path to the summit of the rock.

The eyes of the Wiseman of the Sea were very kind as well as full of great wisdom. Francisco's mother forgot to be afraid of him as she had expected to be. She told him the story of her lost son. The Wiseman listened carefully to her words and then he said:

"Good mother, I am glad to tell you that I know where your Francisco is. He is in the power of a water-nymph who has carried him away to her castle of mother-of-pearl in the depths of the sea."

Francisco's mother felt the tears of joy well up into her eyes. "Is my boy happy there and is he well?" she asked eagerly.

"He is entirely well and happy. The water-nymph gave him a philtre which has made him forget his past life entirely."

"I'm glad you told me that," said the boy's mother. "I was just wondering how my dear lad could be happy while he was causing me so much sorrow. He has always been the best and kindest son with which a mother ever was blessed."

The Wiseman of the Sea started to say something, but the woman interrupted as a new thought flew into her mind. "Tell me," she cried, "is there no way of getting him back? With all your wisdom can't you think of some way to make him once more remember the mother who loves him and the little home in which we have passed so many happy days together? Do you not know some means of breaking the power which this water-nymph has over him?"

The Wiseman looked out across the sea in silence for at least a minute and a half. He thought hard. Francisco's mother watched him with eager eyes. She could hardly wait for his answer. At last these were the words which fell from his lips:

"You have shed many tears, good woman, but tears are still to flow if you are to bring back your son."

"Oh, must I suffer more?" cried the heart-broken mother. "It seems that I have already lived a lifetime since my dear lad kissed me in the moonlight. I have endured all that I can bear."

The Wiseman smiled gently as he raised his hand. "Listen, my child," he said. "Your tears must be shed upon the bosom of the waters. If, perchance, one of them should fall upon your son's heart there in the palace of the water-nymph in the depths of the sea, the power of her philtre will be broken."

"I'll shed whole oceans of tears if I can break the power of that water-nymph and bring back my Francisco," said his mother.

The fact is that she began to shed tears then and there, even before she had thanked the Wiseman of the Sea for what he had told her.

Now it happened that Francisco had grown to love the beautiful palace of mother-of-pearl in the depths of the sea. He never tired of all its beauty. About the palace there were lovely gardens filled with flowers made of precious gems. Each tiny bud of that garden was worth a king's ransom, so rich were the jewels which composed it. The water-nymph often gathered her arms full of these rare blossoms and wove them into a garland to

crown Francisco's golden curls. He never had a thought of the old life at home with his mother, so completely had the nymph's philtre done its work.

There was always a big fish swimming about the palace. On its back there was a cushion of seagreen satin embroidered with lovely pearls.

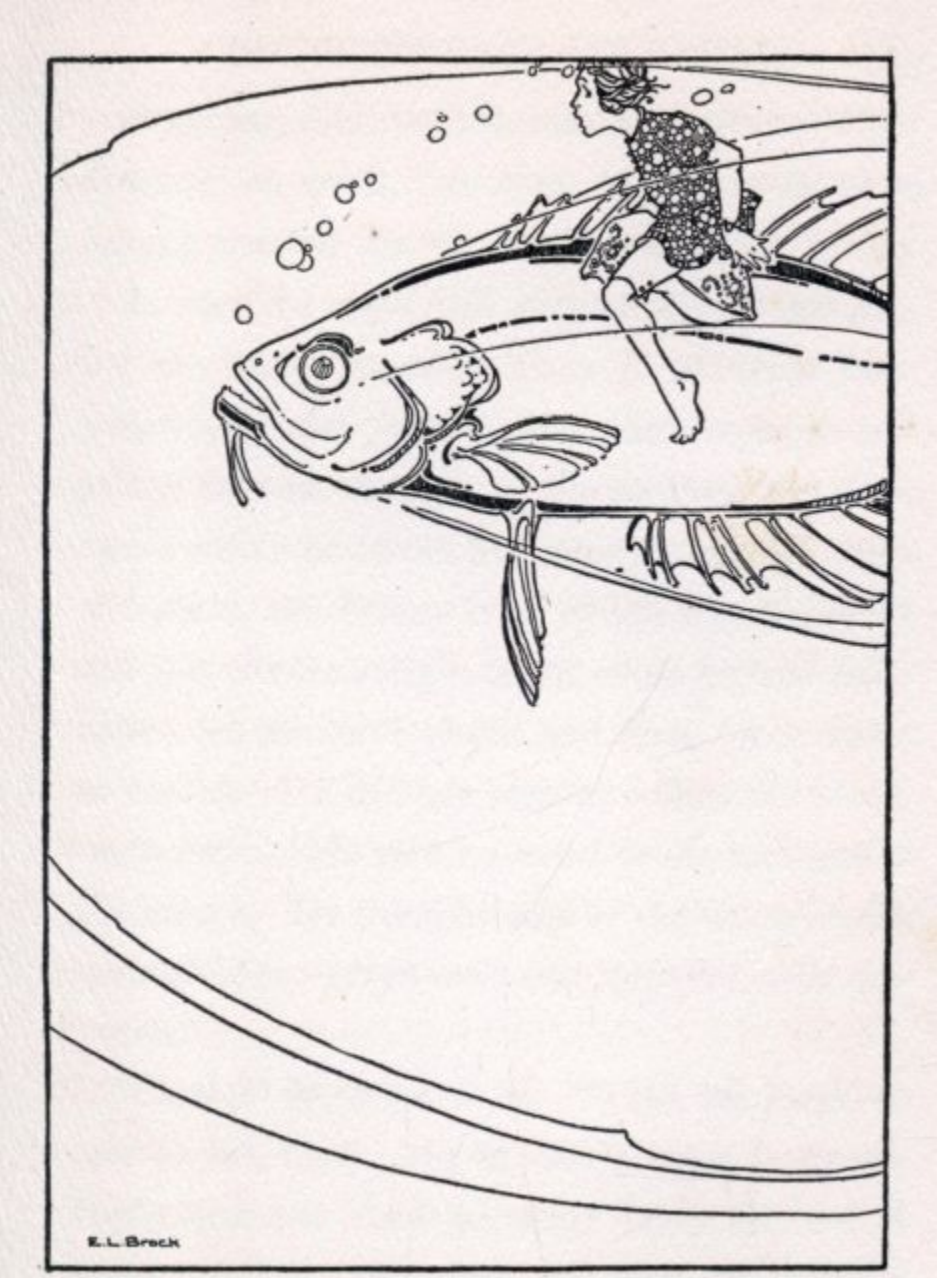
"This is your riding horse," said the water-nymph to Francisco the first day he had seen it. "If you should ever get tired of the palace and find the life here a bit monotonous, just mount this horse and ride about for a little."

The water-nymph had shaken out her long fair tresses so that they covered as much as possible of the fishtail she had instead of feet. She was very sensitive about the fact that she had no feet upon which to wear pretty little slippers like those of the maidens she had seen so often as they called out gay greetings to the handsome fisher-lad.

Francisco had smiled into her eyes. "How absurd," he cried, "to think of such a thing as getting tired of this wonderful place!"

In fact the days had slipped by all too fast for the happy youth. Then it suddenly happened one day while the water-nymph was asleep that he thought of his mother, the little house which had been his home for sixteen years and more, the fishing boat which was his pride and joy, the moonlight night when he had gaily kissed his mother's cheek and gone away never to return. He did not stop to waken the sleeping nymph. He said no word to the servants of the palace. He thought only of the fish with the cushion of sea-green satin embroidered with rare pearls.

"Quick!" he cried to it. "Take me home as fast as you can! My mother's heart is breaking! She has shed so many tears for me, I know, that by this time she may be entirely blind."



"Take me home as fast as you can!"

"Take me home as fast as you can!"

In another hour Francisco was safe at home with his mother's arms about him. She had shed so many tears that her eyes were swollen almost shut, but they were not closed so completely that they could not shine with the great joy which once more filled her heart.

"Promise me one thing," she said to him. "Give me your word that you'll never go fishing again. I don't trust that water-nymph even in the daytime."

Accordingly, Francisco gave up being a fisherman and became a hunter. To make his spears, he gathered the young sapling which grew on the hillside even down to the edge of the water. He had grown still handsomer while he had lived in the palace of mother-of-pearl in the depths of the sea, and there were twice as many pretty maidens who cast smiling glances in his direction.

It was the daughter of the rich man of the village who at last won the heart of Francisco. When he went a-wooing, however, he had no gift to take except the birds he had killed with his own hand. The rich man laughed at him. These were his words:

"When my daughter marries it shall be only to a youth who can bring her rich gifts."

Francisco went away with a sad heart and sat upon the rocks at the edge of the sea, gazing out over the water with eyes so full of tears that they saw nothing.

The water-nymph was not far away from the shore those days. She was always seeking for a glimpse of the golden head which she had so often crowned with flowers. Her joy now at the sight of him was buried by her sorrow when she saw that his heart was full of woe. She knew at once the cause of his grief.

The next morning when Francisco went to get wood to make a new spear, he found a necklace of priceless pearls lying on the shore. It was the gift of the water-nymph, but since his heart had been touched by his mother's tears he had entirely forgotten her. He took the gift to the maid he loved with never a thought of the giver.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF NAPLES

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The Story of a Prince's Quest

There was once a king who had an only son. The years passed by and he did not marry, so one day his father called him before him and said:

"The time has come when you should marry, my son. You are now at the age when you should no longer wait to choose your bride. Why is it that you have not already done this?"

The prince replied:

"I will wed no one except the daughter of the king of Naples."

"Do you know that the king of Naples has a daughter?" asked the father.

"No," answered the son. "I do not know."

"I should advise you to find out whether or not the king of Naples happens to have a daughter before you decide to marry her," remarked the king dryly.

"That is good advice," replied the prince. "I thank you."

Accordingly, he asked everybody he met whether the king of Naples had a daughter. There was no person to be found who knew anything about it.

"You'll have to go to Naples to obtain this information," advised the king. "It is a long journey, but if you are determined to marry nobody except the daughter of the king of Naples there seems to be no way except to go there and learn whether or not he has a daughter."

Accordingly, a ship was prepared and the prince sailed for Naples. It was a difficult, stormy voyage, but finally they arrived safely. The moment they landed the beggars came crowding about them. The prince distributed alms among them most generously.

Then he asked: "Does any one know whether or not the king of Naples has a daughter?"

There was nobody who knew. Finally, however, an old woman said that once she passed by the royal palace and there was a beautiful face at the window.

"I think that perhaps this was the daughter of the king of Naples, but I do not know," she added.

"Go at once and find out," ordered the prince. "You shall be richly rewarded."

The old woman hastened to the royal palace. She saw the same lovely face at the window which she had seen before.

"Lovely lady, I want to talk to you!" she called out.

Now it happened that day that the princess was feeling decidedly bored and out of tune with life. It looked like an interesting diversion to talk with the old woman. Thus it came to pass that she opened the window graciously.

"What do you wish, good mother?" she asked.

"Are you the daughter of the king of Naples?" questioned the old woman.

"I am," replied the princess.

"May I come some day to sell you pretty things?" asked the old woman.

The princess appointed an hour the next day when she might come with her wares. Then the old woman hurried back to the waiting prince.

"The king of Naples has a daughter!" she cried. "A very beautiful daughter, too!"

The prince showered the old woman with gold. He was so delighted that at last he had found this out that he could well afford to be generous.

The old woman thanked him. "I did something else for you, kind sir," she said. "I made an appointment to see the princess to-morrow. I am going to the palace at four o'clock to sell pretty things to her."

"Well done, good mother!" cried the prince, again thrusting his hand into his purse. "Let me go in your place!"

The old woman gladly consented, and the prince dressed himself as a peddler. The next afternoon at four o'clock he went to the palace of the king of Naples.

"It is a peddler with many interesting wares for sale," said the servant who answered his knock. "He speaks of an appointment with your Royal Highness."

"Yes," said the princess. "A peddler was to come to-day at four o'clock with pretty things for me to buy."

Accordingly, the prince was admitted to the presence of the daughter of the king of Naples. If she were surprised to find the peddler a handsome young man instead of the old woman with whom she had talked the day before she did not show it.

"What lovely things you have!" she cried as she examined the tray full of ribbons and beads and trinkets.

She selected a number of the wares and then she asked, "What is the price of these?"

The prince would not set a price.

"If your Royal Highness is pleased with these," said he, "I have many more things at home which you will like even better. I'll bring them to you

to-morrow."

"That will be splendid!" cried the princess. "Come again to-morrow at this hour."

The next day the prince again dressed himself as a peddler, but underneath the outer garments he wore his own rich clothing. When he was admitted to the royal palace he laid aside his peddler's disguise and stood before the princess looking like the true prince he was. He was very handsome in his rich suit of crimson velvet, with his hat with the long plume in his hand. The princess was so surprised that she turned pale.

"Who are you?" she cried. "You surely are not the peddler who came here yesterday!"

The prince smiled into her eyes, and, even without the peddler's garments which were rolled up on the tray, she would have recognized him.

He told her of the quest which had led him there, and she admired all the patience and diligence he had shown in finding out her existence. When he asked her to marry him at once, she readily consented. They planned that she should steal down the staircase at night and go away with him on his ship.

All this sounded very romantic to the daughter of the king of Naples. She had never dreamed that a thing like this would ever happen. All her life she had been so closely guarded that stealing out of the palace and sailing away in the prince's ship seemed the most wonderful thing in the world.

The next night had been agreed on, and long ahead of the appointed hour the prince sat on horseback at the foot of the stairway down which the princess would steal. He was very weary with all the excitement of the past three days, and as he waited he fell asleep. A robber passed by and saw his sleeping form hanging limply on the saddle.

"I'll gently deposit him on the ground and get away with his horse and saddle," thought the thief, as he stopped and regarded the horse with a critical eye.

Just then, however, he saw something which made him change his mind about hurrying away after he had deposited the prince's sleeping form beneath a tree. There was the loveliest maiden he had ever seen creeping silently down the stairway. She came straight up to him.

"I'm ready, beloved," were her words.

The robber silently lifted her behind him on the horse's back and together they rode away.

"Where is your boat?" asked the princess after they had ridden together for some time without speaking.

"So it is a boat which the fair lady is looking for," thought the thief. "I was expecting this good horse to carry us the whole distance. A boat is a bit difficult to arrange, but it can be done if necessary. There ought to be a boat around somewhere for me to steal."

He left the daughter of the king of Naples on the shore while he went to steal a boat. When he returned the light shone upon his face and the girl thought that he did not look the same as the day before.

"Of course, I've seen him only twice," she told herself in an effort to gain assurance. "It must be the prince, my own true love."

"Here is our boat," said the robber, and together they embarked.

As the morning light shone upon the robber the princess saw that he was not in the least like the prince who had come a-peddling. The robber laughed.

"Does my lady know with whom she is going away?" he asked.

"I thought I was going with the prince who is my lover," she replied, bursting into bitter tears.

Running away was not half so romantic and delightful as she had pictured it. She heartily wished that she were back in the royal palace.

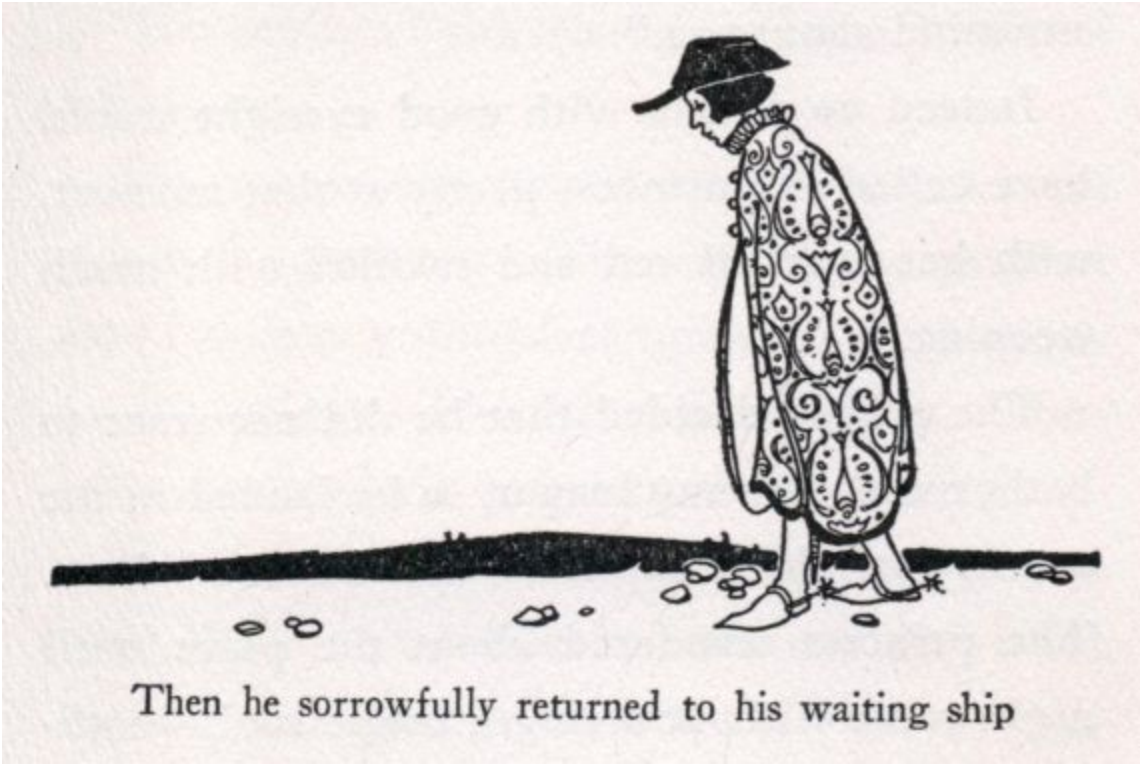
As for the prince, he soon awoke and looked about the palace garden where he was lying under the tree.

"How did I get here?" he asked as he rubbed his eyes sleepily.

There was none to tell him, so he decided that his horse must have thrown him off and run away.

"It is queer that my fall did not awaken me," he said to himself. "It is a bit awkward to lose my horse. However, if the princess only keeps her promise and comes to me we shall manage to get to our ship somehow."

He waited very patiently for a time and then he began to fear that the princess had repented of her promise to run away. He did not give her up, however, until it was almost daylight. Then he sorrowfully returned to his waiting ship.



Then he sorrowfully returned to his waiting ship

"I have at least found out that the king of Naples has a daughter and that she is the most beautiful princess in the whole world," he said. "If she prefers not to have a run-away marriage it will doubtless be better for me to sail home and tell my father to make arrangements with the king of Naples for our wedding. There are some advantages in this more dignified method."

Thus it happened that the prince sailed away for his own country, never dreaming that the princess had kept her promise to steal down the stairway in the night and that she was then in the hands of the wicked robber.

The daughter of the king of Naples sobbed and cried so loud when she found that it was not her own prince with whom she was sailing that the robber became quite disgusted with her.

"I thought you were a pretty little maid," he said, "when I first saw you, but now I've changed my mind about you."

Indeed no person with good eyesight would have called the princess pretty at that moment, with her face all red and swollen with much weeping.

The robber decided that he did not want to bother with her any longer, so he landed in the country of the Junqueiras and left her there. The princess wandered about the place until night came without seeing a single soul—nothing but the sea, sky and rocks.

She was really, however, not far from the hut in which there lived the wife and daughter of a poor fisherman. In the stillness of the night they heard a cry.

"Some one is in trouble outside, mother," said the daughter.

"Perhaps the pirates have come and by this cry are trying to lure us out," answered her mother cautiously. There were often pirate ships which stopped there. The daughter listened carefully.

"No, mother," she insisted. "I'm sure this is a girl's cry."

The two women opened their door and crept out in the darkness. The sobs of the princess soon led them to the place upon the rocks where she lay crying as if her heart would break. They lifted her tenderly and carried her home.

The fisherman's daughter gave the princess some of her own clothes to wear and they lived together as if they were sisters. Together they did all the work of the little house and the princess was too busy to weep. Sometimes, however, she cried in the night when the fisherman's wife and daughter were asleep. She wept for her lost love and for the royal palace of the king of Naples which had always been her home.

Now it happened that the prince's ship encountered a great storm and was driven about by the sea. At last it was blown by the gales to the land of the Junqueiras.

The prince saw the fisherman's daughter and the princess standing on the rocks by the sea. He stared hard at the princess. Then he spoke in a voice which shook.

"You remind me of some one I used to know," he said. "Tell me your name, I pray you, fair maid."

The princess looked down at the garments of the fisher maid which she wore. She blushed. The prince she had recognized the very moment she had seen him.

"I am the daughter of the king of Naples," she said.

The fisherman's daughter stared at her in amazement.

"She is no king's daughter!" she cried. "She is a poor abandoned maid who came to us out of the sea. We found her upon these very rocks. It is my own dress that she is wearing. A king's daughter, indeed! She is no more the daughter of the king of Naples than I am!"

But the prince had taken the daughter of the king of Naples in his arms. As soon as they returned to the palace their wedding was celebrated with great joy and they lived together as God lives with the angels.

MARIA-OF-THE-FOREST

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The Story of a King and His Fate

Once upon a time there was a young king who went into the deep forest on a hunting expedition. He and his favorite page became separated from the rest of the party and soon they realized that they were lost. As night approached they found the rude hut of a charcoal burner and begged for permission to pass the night there. They were received most hospitably.

Just at the hour of midnight the king was awakened from his sleep by a voice. This is what it said:

"Here in this hut is born to-night
The maiden of your fate:

You can't escape your lot, young king;
Your fate for you will wait.

'Tis fate—'tis fate—'tis fate."

The king turned over on his pillow and tried to sleep, but the strange voice kept ringing in his ears. He rose early.

As soon as he saw the charcoal burner the man said: "A baby daughter was born to me last night."

"At what time?" asked the king.

"It was just midnight," replied the charcoal burner.

The king awakened his page and told him what had happened.

"I refuse to wed any maid born in this poor hut," he said. "You must help me to escape this fate."

"What can I do about it?" asked the page, yawning.

"You must steal this babe this very day and put it to death," said the king sternly.

The page did not dare refuse, and easily obtained possession of the baby when no one was looking. He carried her away into the deep forest, but he did not have the heart to put an innocent babe to death. He left her in a hollow tree, wrapped up in the bright red sash he wore.

When he had returned to the king he confessed that he had been too tender-hearted to slay the baby. The king was angry.

"Take me to the baby," he said. "I'll do the deed myself."

Though they searched long and faithfully they were unable to find the hollow tree where the baby had been left. They, of course, did not wish to

return to the hut of the charcoal burner, and at length they found their way out of the deep forest.

"No one will ever discover that baby if I could not find it myself! She will soon die without food," said the page.

The king agreed that it was quite impossible for the babe to escape death, but he could not forget the strange voice which had said:

> "Here in this hut is born to-night
> The maiden of your fate:
> You can't escape your lot, young king;
> Your fate for you will wait.
>
> 'Tis fate—'tis fate—'tis fate."

Now it happened that very day that a woodcutter was working in the forest. Suddenly he heard what sounded like the cry of a baby.

"There can't be a child here in the deep forest," he said to himself and went on with his work.

The cry continued, however, and it sounded very near, almost under the woodcutter's feet. He looked into the hollow log and there he found a dimpled baby girl wrapped in a bright red sash.

"Poor little thing! Her own mother has abandoned her. My good wife will be a mother to her," he said.

The woodcutter's wife had no children of her own and received the baby gladly. She named her Maria-of-the-forest. As the days flew by and the babe thrived under her care, she could not have loved her more had she been her own child.

The weeks and months passed and soon the little Maria-of-the-forest had grown into a lovely little girl five years old. Her kind foster mother made a bonnet for her out of the bright red sash which she had found

wrapped about her the first time she saw her. It made Maria's dark eyes look even brighter than before.

Now it happened that the king and his page were again hunting in the forest and passed by the house of the wood cutter. The page noticed the pretty little girl and the red bonnet she wore. He called her to him and examined it carefully.

"There can be no doubt that material is from my own red sash," he confessed to the king. "This woodcutter's daughter could have such a bonnet as this in no other way."

The king bade him make inquiries about the child and soon the page found out that the little maid was in truth the baby he had left in the hollow tree. The king ordered him again to steal her. This time the king plotted her death by drowning. He had a box made for her, put her in it, and threw her into the sea with his own hand.

"I refuse to wed any girl brought up in a woodcutter's hut," he raged. "I'll escape that fate."

Nevertheless he could not escape the memory of the strange voice which had said:

> "Here in this hut is born to-night
> The maiden of your fate:
> You can't escape your lot, young king;
> Your fate for you will wait.
>
> 'Tis fate—'tis fate—'tis fate."

It was most annoying to remember it.

It happened soon after that a ship encountered the box floating upon the sea. The sailors rescued it and opened it with interest. Inside they were surprised to find a pretty little dark-eyed girl with a bright red bonnet on

her head. She could not tell them where she had come from but she said her name was Maria-of-the-forest.

When the sailors arrived in their own country they told the story of finding the child and the king asked to see her. He and the queen were so pleased with her lovely face and gentle manners that they received her into the royal palace. She was brought up as a lady-of-waiting to their own little daughter of about the same age.

When, after a dozen years, the princess was wedded, all the kings of near-by countries were invited to the marriage feast. The king who had been lost in the forest came with the others. At the feast there was no one more beautiful than Maria-of-the-forest. The king danced with her.

"Who is the girl?" was his eager question.

"She has been reared in the royal palace as if she were in truth the sister of the bride," was the reply.

The king fell in love with the beautiful maid and gave her a ring. The page, however, was suspicious when he heard her name. He lost no time in making inquiries about her. What he found out made him very sure that she was in truth the daughter of the charcoal burner. He reported his suspicions to the king.

"Never mind," said the king. "I'll wed the maid anyway. One can't escape from one's fate."

THE SEVEN ENCHANTED PRINCES

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The Story of How Honoria Kept Her Promise

Long ago there was a little maid who lived all alone with her grandmother. They were very poor. The girl's name was Honoria.

One day the grandmother sent the girl out to sell some of the oranges from their orange tree.

"You must bring home at least three vintens to me," she said. "Don't dare return without at least that small amount of money."

Honoria went from door to door trying to sell the oranges. Every one seemed to have plenty of them that day. There was nobody who would purchase a single one.

She walked on and on through the town, everywhere obtaining the same answer, "We do not wish to purchase any oranges to-day."

Finally she found herself outside the town and in the forest. There was a house with the door wide open and on the table in front of the door lay three vintens. There was no one in sight and nobody answered Honoria's knock at the door.

"I'll take the money and leave some oranges in place of it," said Honoria. "That will not be stealing."

Accordingly, she selected some of the largest and finest of her oranges and placed them on the table. She put the money away carefully to take to her grandmother. Then she turned to leave, but found that the door was closed.

She tried her best to open it but could not. Neither could she open any of the windows to climb out by that means. The windows were all fastened just as securely as the door.

"What shall I do?" cried the girl, who was now thoroughly frightened.

She did not like the idea of remaining a prisoner in the house in the forest. All day she tried to find some way of escape, but there seemed

nothing to do except to wait until somebody came to her aid.

"This house is not far from the city. Surely some one will be passing this way and will come and help me get out," said Honoria. "I hope they'll come before night."

There was nothing to eat in the house and she was thankful enough for the big basket full of juicy oranges.

At last it grew dark. Then Honoria heard footsteps outside the house. She could not see who was coming, but a key was turned in the lock and some one entered. She was so frightened that she hid under the table.

A lighted candle showed that seven dwarfs had entered the house. They had brought food with them, and they at once went to work to prepare their evening meal.

"Who left us all these fine oranges?" asked one of the dwarfs.

"I do not know," replied another. "Some one has surely been here and it must have been a kind friend."

Honoria was almost tempted to crawl from under the table and show herself, but she decided that it would be better to stay where she was and go home the next day when it was light.

When morning came, however, she found that she had been sleeping so soundly that she had not heard the seven dwarfs when they left the house. The door was fastened just as securely as before.

Honoria looked about the house and saw that there was enough work to keep her busy all day. There were dishes to wash and floors to sweep and beds to make. Fortunately the dwarfs had left plenty of food.

When night came she heard the footsteps approaching and again hid under the table. As soon as the seven dwarfs came into the house they saw that it had been changed wonderfully during their absence.

"Our dishes are all washed!" cried one of the dwarfs. "Last night we forgot to wash them after supper!"

"Our beds are all made!" cried another. "We left home so early this morning we did not have time to make them!"

"Our floors are all swept and everything is in order!" cried another. "We never have looked so neat and clean!"

"We never have looked so neat and clean"

"We never have looked so neat and clean"

"Somebody must have been here," said one of the dwarfs.

"It is surely a kind friend," said another.

"Perhaps they are here yet!" cried another.

"If they are men we'll treat them like brothers and if they are women we'll treat them like sisters," said the seventh dwarf who had not spoken before. He had been looking around the house carefully, but he had seen no one.

Honoria crawled out from under the table. The dwarfs joined hands and danced around her in a circle.

"We have a big sister now!" they cried. "A big sister to take care of us!"

Honoria knew that if she said anything about leaving the dwarfs they would be heartbroken. She knew, too, that her grandmother would give her a terrible beating for staying away from home so long. The easiest thing seemed to be to remain in the forest and keep house for the seven dwarfs.

Weeks and months went by and Honoria led a happy life in the forest. The dwarfs brought home plenty of delicious food and they also brought her the prettiest dresses she had ever seen. They were green like the moss and the leaves of the forest and brown like the rich earth about the house. There was a little hat with red berries upon it which Honoria thought the most charming hat in the world. She tried it on and ran to the brook to look at her reflection, for there was not a single mirror in the house.

One day the king passed by with his gay hunting party. That day Honoria had on her prettiest moss-green dress and the king thought her the loveliest maiden he had ever seen. He stopped to chat with her.

"Do you live here in the forest all alone?" he asked.

"No, I keep house for my seven brothers," was Honoria's answer.

"What a lovely little housekeeper!" cried the king. "Marry me and come to live in the royal palace!"

"I must ask my brothers first," responded Honoria. "I will tell you to-morrow what they say."

That night when the seven dwarfs came home Honoria told them about her visit from the king.

"How can we spare our big sister?" cried one of the dwarfs.

"Who will keep house for us when she goes away?" cried another.

"Who will make the beds so nicely?" asked another.

"Who will sweep our floors?"

"Who will wash our dishes?"

"Who will sew on our buttons?"

"I have known that our big sister would marry sometime," said the seventh dwarf who had not spoken, but who had been thinking quietly. "Why shouldn't she marry the king?"

"We must let her marry the king! We must not be selfish!" cried all the dwarfs together.

They decided that Honoria should marry the king, but they asked her not to let him kiss her until he had first said these words: "By permission of the seven enchanted princes." He would have to remember it without being reminded by Honoria.

Honoria told the king what her brothers had said and the wedding was celebrated with great joy.

When the king tried to kiss Honoria she burst into tears. He had forgotten all about saying: "By permission of the seven enchanted princes."

Honoria would not let the king kiss her, and she cried so much and struggled so hard that the king thought she had gone crazy. He ordered her shut up in the dark cell underneath the palace. Then he married a new queen.

Now it happened that there was a faithful servant who was quite sure that Honoria was not crazy. When Honoria told her of the words which the king must say before he kissed her this servant tried to think of some way to help her. She was very angry at the fact that there was a new queen.

One day she went to the queen and said: "Queen Honoria who is shut up in the dark cell underneath the palace is much more clever than you are."

"What does Queen Honoria do that is so clever?" asked the new queen.

"Queen Honoria will take a sword and cut off her head. Then she will put it back on again so that it is as good as new. I don't believe you are clever enough to do that."

"I never tried it," answered the new queen, "but just to show you that I'm as clever as Queen Honoria I'll do it."

With these words she seized a sword and cut off her head. Of course she fell dead immediately. The king married a new queen.

Then the servant went to the new queen and said: "Queen Honoria who is shut up in the dark cell underneath the palace is more clever than you are."

The new queen was indignant at this remark. "Why is she more clever than I am?" she asked. "What can she do that I can't do?"

"She can take a sword and cut off her hand. Then she'll stick the hand on again and it will be as good as new."

"I've never tried it, but I'll do it just to convince you that I am clever too," said this new queen.

She took up a sword and cut off her right hand. Then she fainted away. The arm grew full of poison and the queen soon died, but not until she had told the king what the servant had said to her.

The king was very angry at the servant and called her to him.

"What do you mean," he thundered, "by telling such a story about Queen Honoria's magic powers?"

"I wanted you to remember where you had found Queen Honoria," replied the servant.

Then the king suddenly remembered how he had first seen Queen Honoria when she was in the house in the forest. He thought of how pretty she had been in the dress which looked like soft green moss. Then he thought of how she had said that she must ask permission of her seven brothers before she consented to become his queen.

"By permission of the seven enchanted princes!" he cried. "I forgot to say these words before I kissed my dear Queen Honoria!"

He quickly ran to the dark cell underneath the palace where she was confined. He said the magic words and kissed his fair queen who was just as beautiful as before she had been shut up in the cell, though a trifle paler.

In the house in the forest the seven dwarfs who were in truth seven enchanted princes suddenly were disenchanted.

"Our dear sister Honoria did not forget us after all," they cried in joy.

THE LISTENING KING

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The Story of the Trouble Which Came to Him

Once upon a time there lived a king who liked to walk in disguise about the streets of the city, listening at people's doors. It was, in fact, his favorite amusement. Other kings of that land had been fond of war or hunting or fishing or games, but there had never before been one who liked to listen at doors. For this reason he was called "the listening king."

"It is the greatest fun I have," he often said to his counsellors. "Being a king would be a stupid life if one didn't have some diversion."

"Be careful that it does not get you into trouble," said the wise men. "We have often heard that listening to other people's secrets is a dangerous practice."

"I've had nothing but pleasure from it, anyway," the king would reply. Then he would add, "So far, at least."

Sometimes he would take a friend or two with him, and sometimes he would go alone. The habit of listening at doors became more and more a favorite one to him as the months and years passed.

Now in that city there lived a man of humble station who had three pretty daughters. One evening the king passed his house and stopped at the door to listen.

"Whom would you like to marry?" one of the girls was asking. It happened to be the youngest one.

"I'd like to marry the royal baker," the eldest sister replied.

"Why?" asked the youngest one.

"So that I might always eat fresh bread," was the reply.

"Whom would you like to marry?" the youngest sister asked the middle one.

"I'd like to marry the royal meat cook so that I might always eat meat roasted just to a turn," was her answer.

"Whom would you like to marry?" asked the eldest and the middle sister together.

"I'd like to marry the listening king himself," was the reply which their youngest sister made.

"Silly! Silly!" cried her two sisters. "We have perhaps a chance of getting our wishes, but what chance have you?"

"If one wishes for nothing splendid one never gets anything splendid," replied the youngest sister with a blush which made her look very charming to the king as he peeped through the keyhole.

The king went away with a shrewd smile upon his face. The next day he sent for the three sisters to come to the palace. They were very much frightened.

"Well," said the king to the eldest girl, "do you want to marry the royal baker?"

"Yes, your majesty," she replied. "I have no objections."

The king turned to her sister.

"How is it with you?" he asked. "What do you say to marrying the royal meatcook?"

"I'll be most happy to marry him, your majesty," she answered.

The youngest girl was blushing like a rose and her heart was thumping so that she could scarcely breathe. The king smiled as he noticed her fair head bowed upon her breast.

"Would you like to marry the listening king?" he asked her gently.

"Yes, your majesty," she responded, so low that the king could hardly hear her.

"Very well," said the king. "I'll have all these weddings celebrated at once."

Thus it happened that the two eldest sisters got their wishes and married the royal baker and the royal meatcook, while the youngest one wedded the listening king himself. The others were very angry at her luck and their hearts were filled with envy.

"Why didn't we wish to be queens or at least princesses?" one asked the other. "It would have been just as easy to have had our wishes granted!"

"Why didn't we! Why didn't we! How stupid we were!" cried the other.

They passed the time in plotting against their youngest sister, the queen.

A year flew by and twin sons were born to the royal pair. They had gold stars on their foreheads. The whole kingdom was filled with rejoicing. As for the listening king, he was so happy that he forgot to listen at people's doors.

The only persons in the whole country who were not happy were the two jealous sisters. They stole the tiny babies out of the palace and threw them into the river.

"Trouble has at last come to our listening king," said the wise men, when the loss was discovered.

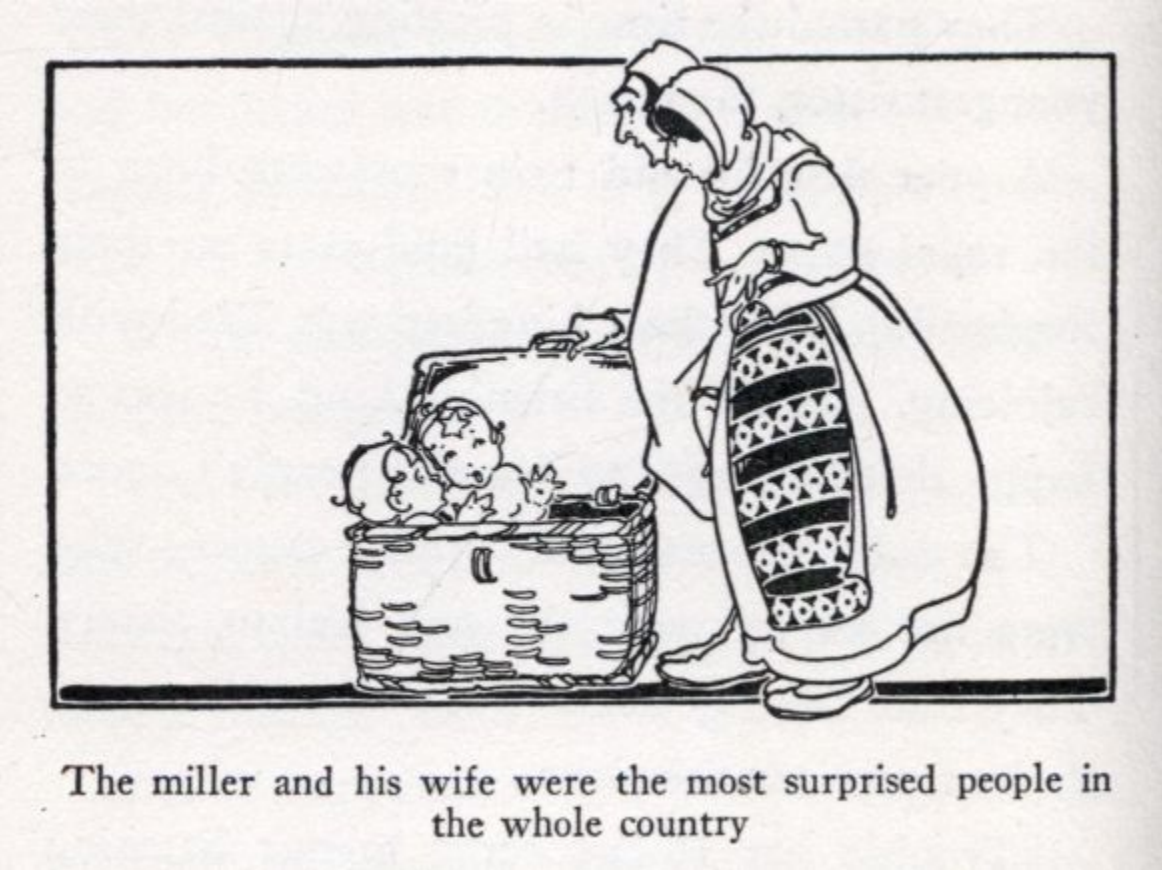
The basket in which the twins had been placed floated away down the stream. It was found by a miller.

"What have we here?" he asked his wife as together they removed the cover from the basket.

"I guess it is something good to eat," said his wife. "What do you think it is?"

"I guess it is a poor little puppy which some one wanted to drown," replied the miller.

Then they took the cover off the basket. The two babies opened their eyes and smiled just then. The miller and his wife were the most surprised people in the whole country and also the happiest ones.



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"What beautiful children!" cried the miller.

"Let's keep them!" cried his wife.

"Of course we'll keep them," replied the miller. "The good God himself must have sent them to us in answer to our prayers."

Just then the miller's wife noticed the golden stars upon their foreheads.

"What does this mean?" she asked.

"I don't know," answered her husband as he examined them carefully. "Perhaps it is just a sign that they are truly the gift of God."

The miller and his wife cared for the two children as if they had been their own. They lived such a long distance from the palace that they never heard the news that the royal babes were missing.

As the two boys grew older they became the handsomest, cleverest lads in the whole kingdom. The gold stars shone and twinkled upon their foreheads. At last the miller's wife made little caps for them to wear to hide the stars. They were altogether too conspicuous.

Then one sad summer a pestilence came upon the land and the good miller and his wife died. The two children were left alone in the world. The listening king had decreed all the orphaned children in the kingdom should be brought to the royal city that they might be fed and cared for. The miller's two orphans went with the others, and the king's wicked sister-in-laws saw them. They recognized them at once because of the golden stars upon their foreheads.

"We must make a new plot to destroy the royal children," said one sister to the other. "And we must be quick about it or the king or queen will see them and recognize them, too, by the golden stars."

"Are you quite sure these are the two royal babes we threw into the river?" asked the other sister doubtfully. "It is a bit difficult for me to believe that our sister's children can be so handsome."

"I'm entirely certain of it," assured her sister. "There is no one except the royal babes who could have those golden stars."

While the wicked sisters plotted, the two children had approached the royal gardens. Inside the garden there was a beautiful parrot with feathers of green and gold.

"I'm going to catch that bird," said one of the brothers. "Wait here while I go inside the gates."

He could not catch the parrot and he called his brother to come and help him. Together they succeeded; and, with the beautiful green-and-gold parrot tightly clutched, they tried to slip outside the gate of the royal gardens.

Just as they were almost out, the great gates swiftly closed and caught their garments.

"We're caught! We're caught!" cried the two children. "How can we ever get the gates unfastened!"

At the sound of their cries, the royal gardeners, the courtiers and the listening king himself came to the rescue.

When the king saw the golden stars upon their foreheads he leaned against the nearest tree for support.

"What children are these?" he asked in a voice which shook.

"I never saw them before," replied the head gardener. "I think they are some of the orphan children which the great mercy and clemency of your royal majesty have caused to be rescued from the plague."

"Who are your parents, my children?" asked one of the courtiers.

"We are the children of the good miller and his wife," they replied. "Our kind foster parents are now dead with the plague."

"Where did this miller and his wife find you?" asked the king eagerly.

Then the two children told the story of how the miller had found them in a basket in the river. They knew it well, for it was their favorite story of all the ones which the miller's wife had told them.

The courtiers looked at each other in amazement. Every one had noticed the bright stars shining on the children's brows.

"I believe you are the two dear babes lost from this palace!" cried the king as he took them in his arms.

"Who put them in that basket?" asked the king's counsellors.

"If I knew you may be sure that fitting punishment would be visited upon them!" cried the king.

The beautiful green-and-gold parrot had escaped from the children's arms and had flown back to a tree near the gates of the royal gardens. Suddenly he was heard to speak.

"Go find the king's sisters-in-law," were the words he said.

The king's sisters-in-law were quickly brought into the garden. A look at their guilty faces convinced every one that they were the ones who had placed the royal babes in the basket and had thrown them into the river.

"You shall now receive the punishment which you have so richly deserved!" cried the king as he frowned upon them sternly.

"Where is the good queen?" some one asked.

The queen had been sleeping in her own apartments and had not heard the noise in the garden. When the courtiers brought her there and she saw the two handsome boys with the bright stars shining on their foreheads, she fainted with the joy of it.

JOSÉ THE BEAST SLAYER

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The Story of a Boy Who Grew Up in the Forest

There was once a king who had a little daughter. He went to the Wise Man of the Forest to learn how best to bring her up, and this is what he was told:

"For twelve years you must keep your daughter in a tower in the forest. It should have no door, only a little window through which you may pass food to her. You must give her meat which has no bones in it."

The king ordered a tower constructed in the deep forest. It had no door, and only a little window. Here the princess was placed. Every day food was passed to her through the little window. The king himself took charge of this, so that he might be sure that there was no meat given her which had bones in it.

The years flew by, and at last the twelve year period was nearly up. Then the king went away one day and left the servants to carry food to the princess. They were careless, and gave her meat which had a bone in it.

The little princess had grown very tired of being shut up in the tower of the forest.

"Ah," said she when she discovered the bone in her meat. "At last I have something with which to make this little window larger. I've tried in vain to make it bigger with my fingers."

She used the bone to dig away the wall each side of the window and soon the little opening had grown so large that the princess could lean her head out of it and look up at lofty trees. That very day a duke passed that way on a hunting expedition and saw the beautiful princess in the tower. He fell in love with her immediately.

Now that the princess had some one to help her make the hole larger it was an easy matter to make it big enough to escape. That very night she ran away with the duke.

When the king returned from his journey he found the tower in the forest entirely empty. There was nothing but the yawning hole to tell him

of his daughter's escape. He tried in vain to find out what had become of her, but there was no person who could tell him anything about her.

The princess had gone with the duke across a great river which no one else knew how to cross. She lived in a big cave in the rocks, and after all the years in the tower it seemed a wonderful home indeed. She was never tired of admiring the trees and flowers of the forest and listening to the songs of the birds. When at last her baby son was born she thought that she was the very happiest person in the whole world.

Now when the baby was two years old, the duke decided that they must take him to a hermitage to be baptized. They went down to the great river and he carried his little son across it in safety. Then he returned for the princess, but on the way his foot slipped and he fell into the river. The strong current bore him swiftly away, leaving the princess on one side of the river and her little son on the other.

"How shall I get across?" cried the princess when she saw what had happened.

"Don't worry, mother," replied the child. "I'll come and get you."

To her amazement he crossed the great river in safety and bravely escorted his mother to the other bank in spite of her tears and cries of fear.

"Well done, my son!" she said when on the other bank. "You are indeed a son to be proud of!"

They went to a church and the boy was baptized. José the Beast Slayer was the name he chose. Then they wandered on until at last they came to a house with a door in which a little window had been cut. The boy thrust in his arm and opened the door as if it had been his own.

"Walk in, mother dear," were his words.

Together they entered the house and together they explored the various rooms. There was nobody there and there was nothing to eat. Accordingly, José went out begging. He asked alms at the royal palace and there he was

given money to buy food. There was even enough left over to pay for a gun.

Now that he owned a gun there was no need of begging any more. He shot plenty of game for his mother and what was left he carried to the royal palace to give to the king.

One day in the deep forest he entered a cave where the giant of the forest lived.

"What are you doing here, little penny chicken?" asked the huge giant as he frowned down at José.

He frowned down at José

He frowned down at José

"I may be a little penny chicken, but I'm not in the least afraid of giants," replied the boy boldly.

"What, a little penny chicken like you not afraid of me!" cried the giant as he picked him up roughly and set him on his neck.

José seized the giant's long beard and drew it around his neck so tightly that the giant fell to the floor dead. Then José seized one of the money-bags and ran home with it to his mother.

"You must carry some of this to the king," said his mother when she saw it and had heard his story.

Accordingly, José carried the money as a gift to the king.

"Who is bringing me all this?" asked the king when he saw it.

"A little lad," replied the king's servants.

"Lead him in to me," said the king. "I'd like to see him."

Accordingly, the boy was led before the throne.

"What is your name, my lad?" asked the king kindly.

"I am called José the Beast Slayer, your majesty," replied the boy as he bowed low before the throne.

"Who are your parents?" asked the king.

"My father is dead," replied José, "and my mother is a princess who ran away from a tower in the forest."

José had often heard the story of his mother's life in the tower. It was the tale he liked best of all.

At the boy's words the king started and looked at him sharply.

"Tell me about this tower," he said eagerly.

"It was a tower in the deep forest," replied José. "It had no door, only a little window through which food was passed to her. She could never have any meat with a bone. This was because the Wise Man of the Forest had told her father that it was the best way to bring her up. One day her father went away and the servants gave her meat with a bone in it and—"

"I always suspected something like that," interrupted the king.

José looked at him in surprise.

"Were you there?" he asked.

The king nodded. "Go on with your story, my boy," he said.

José told all the circumstances of his mother's escape from the tower, just as she had so often described them to him. Tears were running down the king's cheeks when at last the story was ended.

"My lad, you are my own grandson!" cried the king as he took him in his arms. "Proud am I, too, that I have a grandson like you! Where is your mother now?"

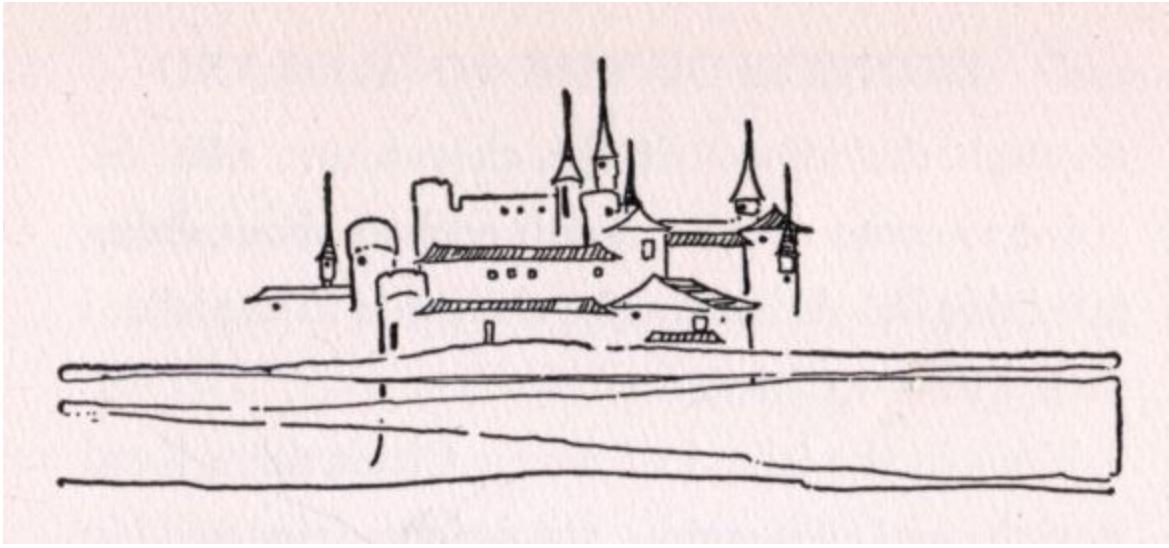
"My mother is in the house in the forest," replied José. "It is she who told me to carry the money to the king."

"Why did she never come to me?" asked the father.

"I think she was afraid she'd be punished for running away from the tower without any door," was José's reply.

When the princess was brought home to the royal palace there was a great feast held which lasted for three days and three nights. Then the king sent his men with José into the forest to the cave where the giant had lived. They brought home so many bags of gold that it required the entire royal army to transport it.

Years passed, and when the old king died it was José the Beast Slayer who was king of the land.



THE PRINCESS OF THE LOST ISLAND

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The Story of Euphemia and Her Good Deeds

Euphemia was the daughter of King Atlas and the granddaughter of the great god Jupiter. She was more beautiful than her fifteen sisters, though they were all lovely.

All the ten sons of Neptune admired her charms and sought to marry her, but she would wed none of them. There was, in truth, no one in all the world who was worthy of her. Euphemia herself knew this and preferred to remain a star in the constellation of the Hyades, her sisters, rather than wed an unworthy husband.

Euphemia became a Christian, they say, through the efforts of the cherubim. She decided to come down to earth and go about doing good deeds. Accordingly, she came to the island called Seven Cities.

Now in the island of Seven Cities there lived a rich and venerable Christian prince. He adopted Euphemia as his own daughter. She was called Princess Euphemia of the island of Seven Cities.

As soon as she came to the island all pain and misery vanished from it. Joy reigned. Banquets were held, songs were sung, gay dances were danced. It was as if every day were a feast day.

Time passed. Many changes came to the island, but Euphemia herself remained always young, always beautiful.

One day two priests from the outside world visited the island. They saw the magnificent palaces, the beautiful gardens. Two tame lions followed them about. They were as gentle as if they had been dogs.

"We are in the celestial regions," said one priest to the other.

"Let us stay here forever," said the other priest. "It is indeed the Paradise of which we have dreamed."

The two priests had come in a tiny launch from a large boat.

"We should return and tell our friends about this celestial region," they agreed. "To-morrow we will all explore this wonderful country."

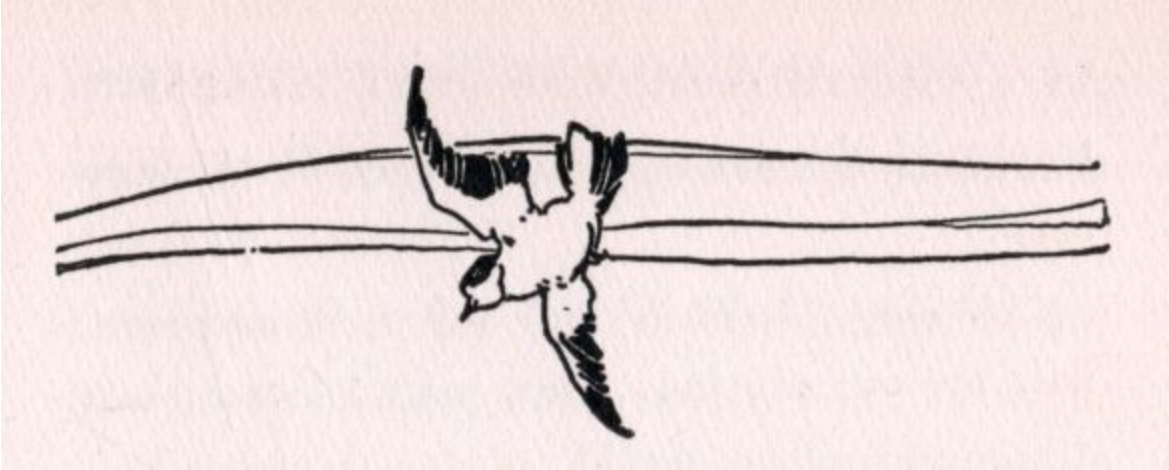
It was almost dark when the two priests reached their ship by the little launch. They reported all the things they had heard and seen in the new land.

The next morning, however, the island had entirely disappeared. The water stretched before their gaze with an unbroken rippling blue surface.

"What has become of our beautiful island," the good priests asked in amazement.

"We were anchored off the shore of one of the enchanted islands," was the opinion of everybody.

Euphemia, they say, has not yet disappeared entirely. She has changed her form. She is still found in the Azores in the plant called SOLANEA, the flower of St. Cosmo. She is still doing good deeds. Pain disappears when she comes, just as it did in the lost island. St. Cosmo, the patron saint of all good physicians, could never have gained his reputation without her good deeds.



WHY THE ALVÉLOA BIRD RECEIVED A BLESSING

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The Story of the Bird of Good Luck

In the Azores there is a little bird which is loved and protected by every one. Its name is the Alvéloa. It has a gray back, white breast, head and throat, and black and white wings. The tail of this little bird is always in motion. This is the reason:

Long ago when the wicked king Herod ordered all the babies to be killed, the Holy Virgin fled into Egypt with the Christ child safe in her arms. They rode upon an ass.

The Virgin glanced fearfully behind her as they went along the way. At any moment Herod's messengers might come in pursuit. The tracks of the ass showed plainly in the dusty road.

"Oh!" cried the Holy Mother, "Our enemies will see our tracks! They will know in what direction we have fled!"

The Alvéloa was nearby and heard. She spread out her tail like a fan and shook it about in the dusty road. The tracks of the ass were completely brushed away.

The Holy Mother smiled upon her.

"For this kind deed, little bird, your tail shall be always in motion. By this sign you shall be known and your life shall be spared."

To this very day the tail of the Alvéloa is in motion. St. Michael, himself, the patron of the island of S. Miguel, has asked a special protection for the little bird in his island.

The Alvéloa flew all the way before the Virgin, showing her the road into Egypt.

"My blessing upon you, little bird," said the Virgin. "May you always have the strength to slay your enemy."

To this very day the Alvéloa is able to slay birds much larger than herself.

"The Alvéloa kills the hawk," is a saying in the Azores.

If one wakes in the morning and sees this little gray and white bird before his window he will have a lucky day.

On the way into Egypt the Virgin pointed to the lupine which grew by the wayside.

"Eat, little bird," she said. "Eat until your hunger is satisfied. Blessings be upon you for your kind deeds to me and to the Holy Child. May good

fortune and plenty always attend you."

To this very day this bird blessed by the Virgin is an emblem of good luck.

WHY THE CODORNIZ BIRD RECEIVED A CURSE

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A Story of the Bird Who Walks Humbly

When the Holy Virgin was fleeing into Egypt to escape the persecutions of Herod, the Codorniz bird flew about making a great racket, calling out, "Come this way."

"Keep quiet!" cried the Virgin. "Our enemies will hear you! They will come in pursuit!"

In spite of her words the Codorniz kept up its noise.

"My curse be upon you," said the Virgin. "You shall always walk humbly. You shall never fly high and smile at the sun."

To this very day the Codorniz bird walks humbly. It has many enemies who love to slay it to devour.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR LIKE THE MOTHER OF ST. PETER

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A Story of Why She Stays Outside

If there is no response when you ring the bell or knock at a door in the Azores, you have to stay "outside the door like the mother of St. Peter," they say. This is the story which tells why the mother of St. Peter had to stay outside:

The very stingiest woman in the whole city was St. Peter's mother. She was so stingy that she never gave away a single thing to a beggar. No matter if the beggar were old or sick or blind or crippled or even a mother with a babe in her arms, she always made the same reply, "I have nothing to give away."

Not even when there was famine in the land, but plenty in her own home, would the mother of St. Peter share with the unfortunate.

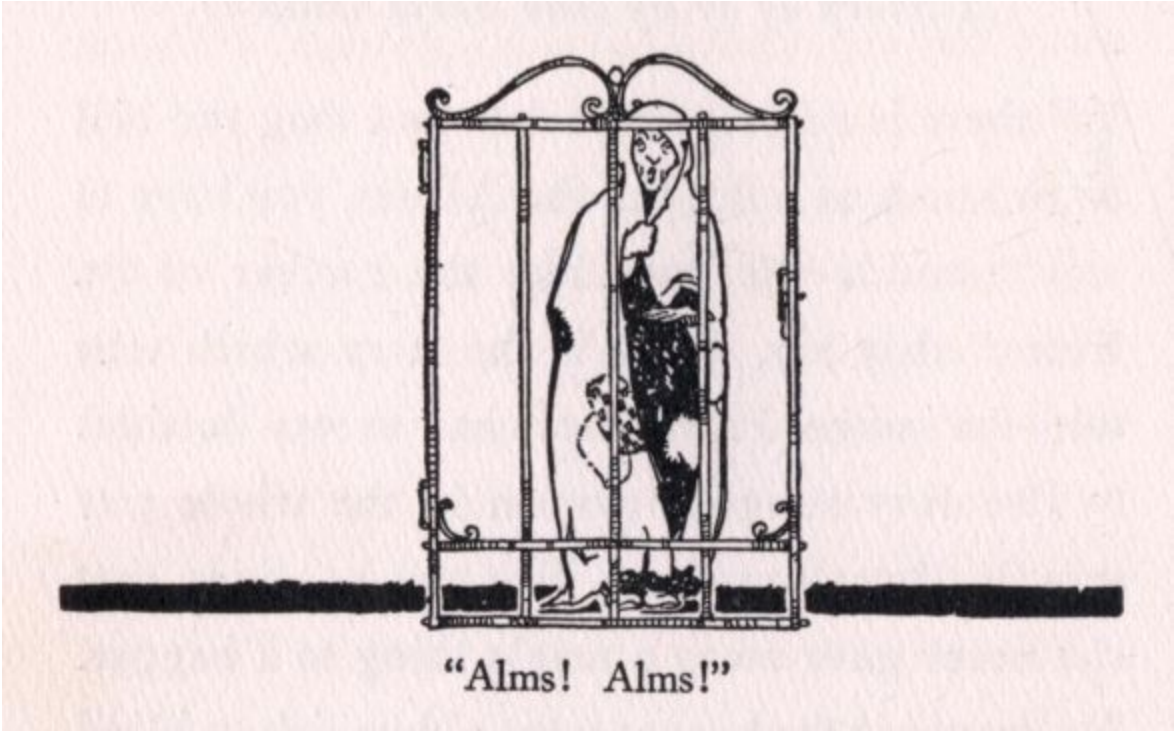
When St. Peter was made the guardian of the keys of Heaven, of course he tried to bring his mother inside the celestial gate.

"When your mother lived upon the earth did she ever share her plenty with any of my poor unfortunate children?" was the question.

St. Peter thought hard. His mother had been a worthy, virtuous woman in many respects, but he could recall nothing which she had ever given to the poor and the unfortunate.

At last he remembered a day when she had gone into the garden to get vegetables for the soup.

A poor beggar woman had stood outside the garden gate, crying: "Alms! Alms, for the love of God!"



"Alms! Alms!"

"Get away from my garden," said St. Peter's mother. "I have no alms to give you. If I give away the vegetables from my garden, I'd soon have nothing left to feed my own family. I'd be begging myself."

The poor beggar woman started to turn away with tears in her eyes. An onion stalk fell from the hand of St. Peter's mother. It was bruised by its fall and covered with mud, but the beggar seized it eagerly.

"Keep it. I wouldn't use it anyway," snapped St. Peter's mother.

St. Peter could remember nothing else to tell, so he related this story.

"Go and find the onion," was the comment.

When St. Peter at last found that onion stalk, it was still dirty with the mud of the garden and crumpled by its fall, just as it had been when his mother had given it to the beggar.

"Hold out the onion and pull your mother in," was the order.

St. Peter held out the onion stalk. It did not reach very far down into Purgatory, but his mother jumped up as high as she could and seized it eagerly.

Slowly and very carefully he pulled her up by it to the Heavenly Gate. Just as she was about to enter the door the onion stalk broke.

"I'm sorry. You'll have to stay outside," said St. Peter. "I've done the best I could for you. The onion stalk was not strong enough to pull you through."

Thus it happens that the mother of St. Peter has to stay outside the door of Heaven.

WHY THE OWL FLIES AT NIGHT

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A Story of Good St. Anthony

Long ago there was an image of the good St. Anthony washed ashore by the rough waves of the Bay of Angra. A little chapel was built to receive it on the steep slopes of Monte Brasil overlooking the bay and here it still remains.

Once upon a time a little boy named Pedro lived in a tiny cottage near St. Anthony's shrine. His mother had died and his father had married a new wife who was often cruel to him. She dressed him in ragged, shabby clothes and the other children of the parish often pointed their fingers at him in scorn because of his poor garments.

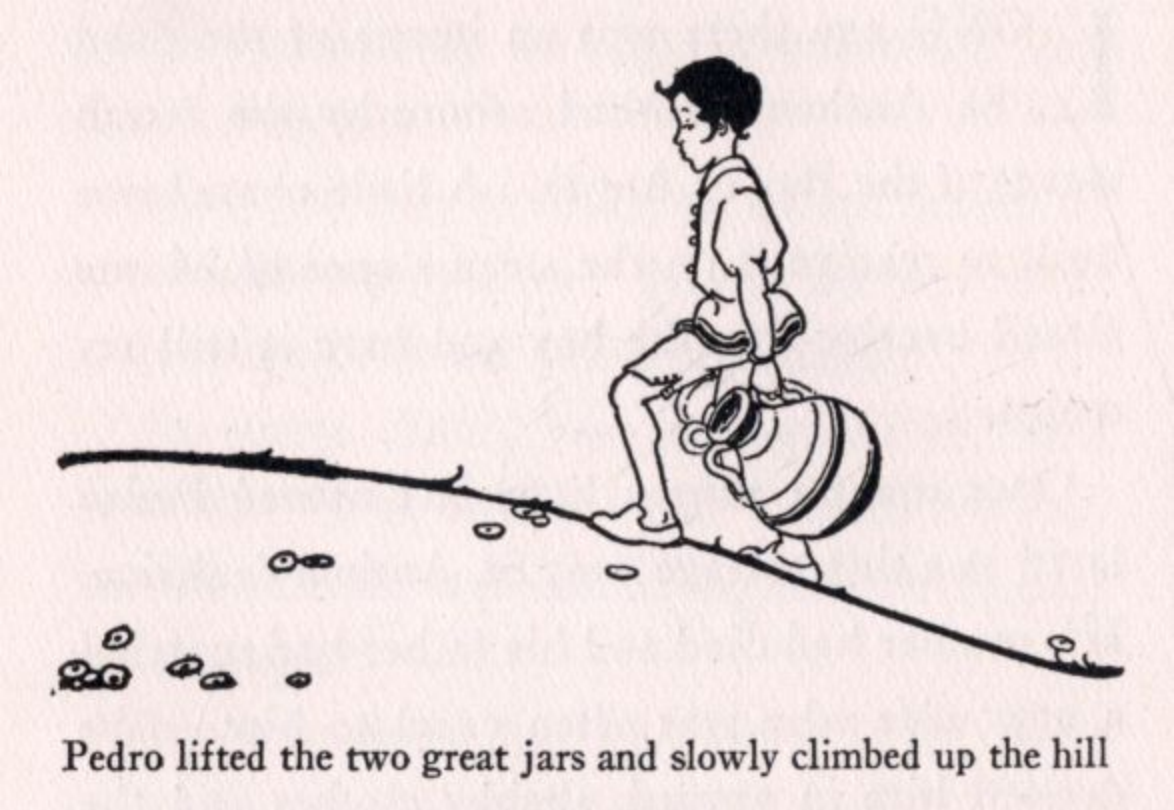
One day as Pedro knelt before the image of the good saint a strange thing happened. His clothing became new and whole. He was dressed as well as any boy in the parish.

"Where did you get clothes like this?" asked the stepmother when he came home that night. "I always knew you were a good-for-nothing. I believe you have stolen them."

Little Pedro told what had happened, but the woman would not believe him.

"Don't stand there talking any longer!" she cried. "Take the water jars and go to the spring and fill them for me. Hurry, I don't want to be kept waiting for the water!"

Pedro lifted the two great water jars which stood on the floor and slowly climbed up the hill to the little spring which supplied water for the family needs during the greater part of the year. Just now the spring had failed, as the stepmother had found out that very day.



Pedro lifted the two great jars and slowly climbed up the hill

"There is no water in the spring now," said an old man whom little Pedro met on the way. The boy had almost reached the spring and the big jars were growing heavy even though they were empty.

"I'm so nearly there I'll go on and see for myself," decided the lad. "The other spring is so far away and the jars will be so heavy that I can never carry them all the long distance. Perhaps there is still a little water here."

When he reached the spring he was surprised to see the water flowing faster than in many a day. He remembered, too, the new suit of clothes he was wearing.

"Luck is with me to-day!" he cried as he filled the water jars. "The good saint Anthony is my friend. He it is who has given me my handsome clothing and he it is who has blessed the spring for me."

When he returned home with the jars full of water his stepmother stared at him in amazement. He had not been gone long enough to obtain it from

the farther spring.

"Where did you get this water?" she asked, as soon as she could find words with which to speak.

Pedro told her that it came from the spring just as it always did.

"That spring is dry to-day!" she cried. "Now I know that you are a liar as well as a thief. Just wait until your father comes home! I'll see that you get the beating you deserve."

Pedro wondered why she had sent him to the spring if she had believed it to be dry, and while he was thinking of this the angry woman gave him a big basket.

"Here," she said. "Go out in the garden and pick up some wood for me. Hurry. Don't keep me waiting. Your slow ways drive me mad."

Pedro knew that all the wood in the garden had been picked up long ago. Now there was nothing in the garden except roses. There were red roses and pink roses and yellow roses and white roses, but not a single stick of wood. High up on the steep slopes of Monte Brasil there might be wood to gather, but the night was dark and the path was steep and long. Little Pedro was very tired, so tired that two great tears rolled down his cheeks.

Suddenly the good saint Anthony from the little chapel stood before him. He smiled kindly at the child. "Why are you crying, my boy?" asked the saint. "I have watched you carefully for a long time and I know you seldom give way to tears, though often your burdens are so heavy that a boy less brave would do little else than weep."

"I have to fill my basket with wood and there is nothing except roses in our garden," replied Pedro. "I'm tired and it is very dark on Monte Brasil to search there for wood."

"Here, dear boy," said the saint, smiling. "Just pick the roses and fill your basket with them. Then take them to your stepmother and see what

she will say to you. I'll be with you."

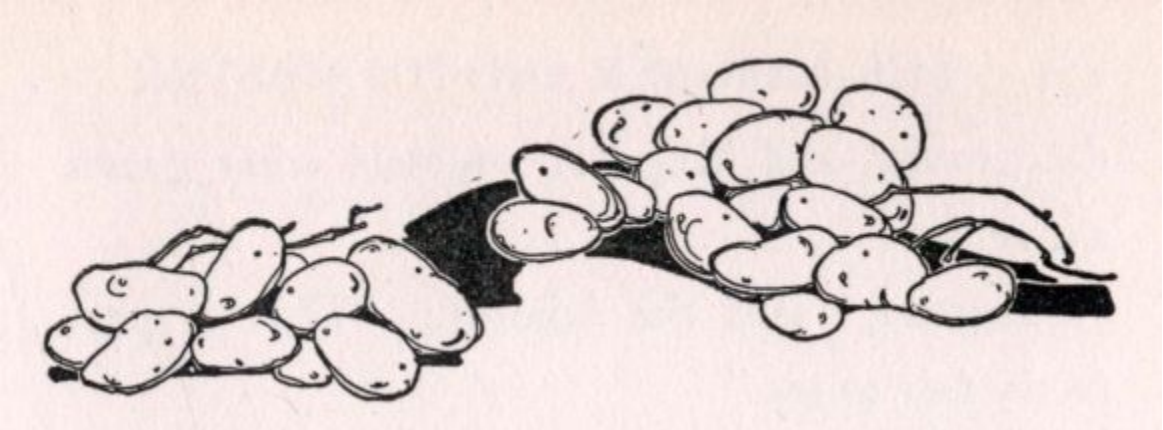
Pedro filled his big basket with the lovely red and yellow and pink and white roses which grew in the garden in such rich abundance. Then he ran into the house with them. As the light from the candles fell upon them, to his amazement he saw that they were no longer roses. The basket was full of wood.

"Where did you get this wood?" cried the woman angrily. "There are only roses in the garden. Where have you been?"

She seized Pedro roughly by the collar of his new coat and shook him until his teeth chattered. He looked up into the saint's eyes. St. Anthony's face was stern.

"Stop, woman!" cried the voice which a moment before had been so kind and gentle. Now it thundered forth in stern accents. "This little lad has done no harm. You have been guilty of a desire to bring harm to him, For this cruelty take the punishment which you so richly merit. It is you who have sent this child out into the night. Now it is I who sends you out into the night."

From that moment Pedro's stepmother was no longer a woman. She was changed into an owl with her eyes the big round circles they had looked when she had gazed up into the fierce face of angry St. Anthony. To this very day the owl has to fly by night.



THE LABORER AND HIS MASTER

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The Story of a Man Who Outfitted Another

Once upon a time there was a laborer who said to his master:

"It is time to plant the fields."

"Very well," said his master. "The part which grows above the ground shall be mine and you shall have in payment for your labor the part which grows below the ground."

"Agreed," said the laborer.

He planted the fields with potatoes. His master had nothing but the tops outside the earth. The laborer harvested many baskets of potatoes that year and sold them for a goodly sum. The master was angry because of this.

"Next harvest time," said he, "we'll see about things! You shall give me what grows below the ground and keep for yourself what grows above."

"Agreed," said the laborer. "That is perfectly fair to me."

The laborer planted the fields with wheat. His master had nothing but the roots, while he harvested a rich crop of wheat which he sold for much money.

"I'll settle with you," said his master.

The laborer was frightened.

"Don't be afraid," said his wife. "When your master comes let me talk to him."

The woman gashed her face and hands with the pruning knife.

The master came to the door and she opened it.

"Where is your husband?" he asked.

"He is sharpening his nails," said she. "See what ugly scratches I already have upon my hands and face."

The master went away without punishing the laborer.

'TIS FAITH WHICH SAVES

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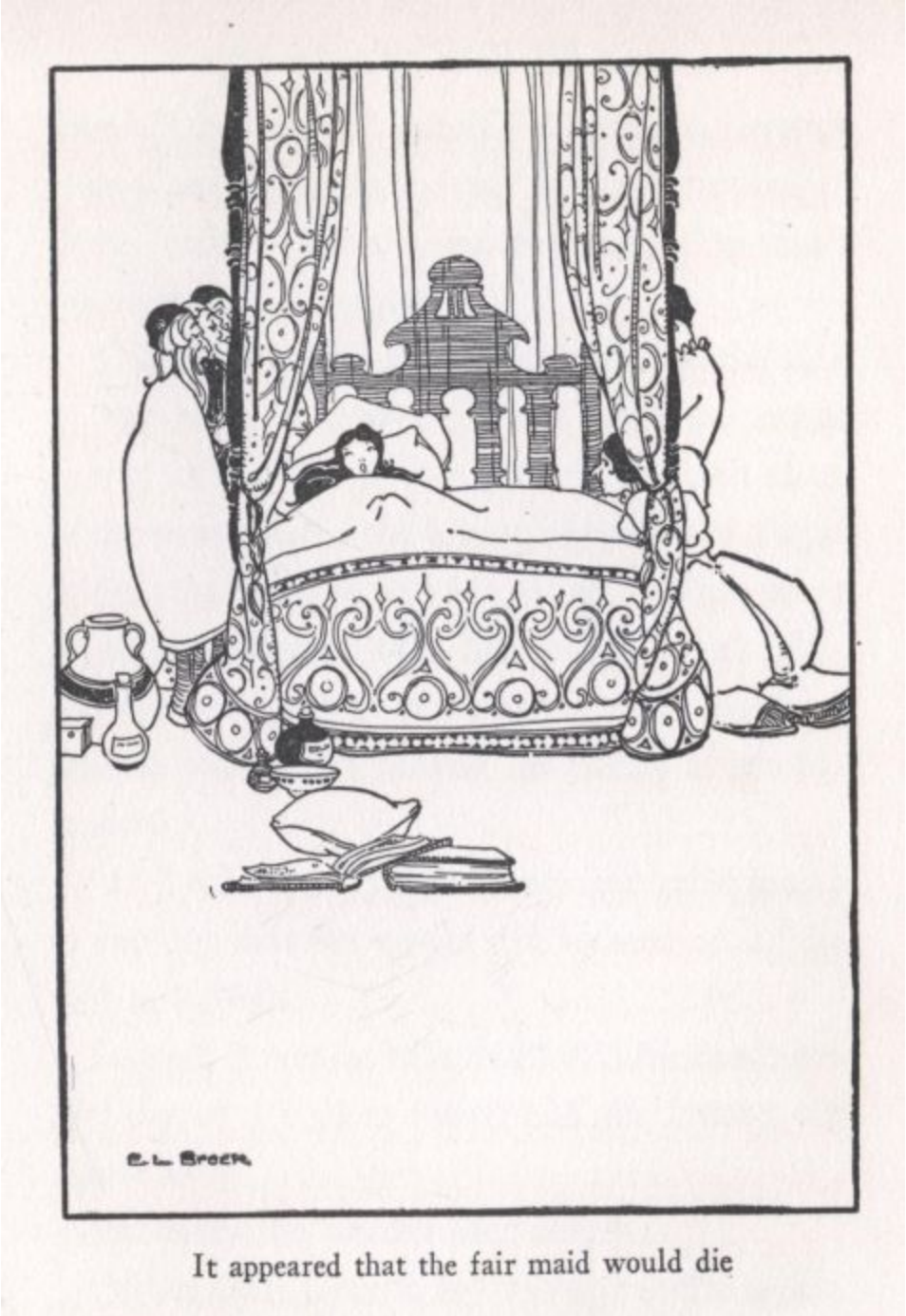
The Story of a Maid Who Was Betrothed to One She Trusted

There was once upon a time a fair maid who lived in the island of Fayal. She was betrothed to a young man of the same island. One day she fell ill with a disease which baffled the skill of all the physicians. Their arts, the mourning of her betrothed, the prayers and tears of her mother, all seemed of no avail. It appeared that the fair maid would die.



It appeared that the fair maid would die

It appeared that the fair maid would die

Now it happened that in one of the nearby islands, St. Michael, there was a miracle-working image called the Santo Christo. The fair maid begged of her betrothed that he would go to St. Michael and procure some of the mysterious miracle-working sweat of the Santo Christo or some of

the miraculous parings of the nails of the image, which had the power to heal any disease.

The young man gladly set out on the quest. On the boat which conveyed him to St. Michael, however, he met a maid with beauty and charm, a maid whose bright eyes made him forget the sad eyes of his betrothed.

When he arrived at his destination he thought only of singing gay songs beneath the balcony of his new love. The days flew by, and soon it was time for the boat to return to Fayal. He had forgotten the mission on which he had come, and he returned to the boat with no relics of the miracle-working Santo Christo.

The homeward journey was rough and stormy. Filled with fear of death at any moment, the young man remembered the fair maid of Fayal who even at that very hour might be dying. His conscience smote him.

"Oh, why did I allow another fair face to crowd out from my heart the image of my beloved?" he asked himself. "Faithless wretch that I am, what shall I say to my betrothed if good fortune and the sea permit me to stand once more at her side?"

The rough waves beat angrily against the side of the boat in answer. That night the storm ceased and in the morning it was fair and clear as the boat entered the beautiful harbor of Fayal under the shadow of Mt. Pico. With clear skies and smooth seas the young man's conscience became less troublesome. He resolved that he would not confess his deceit to his betrothed.

"If I told her it might make her grow worse so rapidly that she would die because of it," he said to himself.

Indeed, it was quite enough to have made the girl die of a broken heart, had she known the whole story.

Suddenly the youth's face clouded.

"What shall I say to my beloved as the reason why I have brought back to her neither the miracle-working sweat of the Santo Christo nor the miraculous nail parings?" he was asking.

His eye fell upon the boat's wooden side. Quickly he shaved off some fine parings of this wood. He wrapped them up carefully and took them to the fair maid of Fayal as if they were parings from the nails of the miracle-working image.

His betrothed's face shone with joy at his return. Tears of thankfulness filled her eyes when she saw the parings which he had brought her.

"How can I ever thank you for your faithfulness in this quest in my behalf, and the great love which prompted you to undertake this stormy, dangerous journey on the rough seas that I might once more be well?"

The young man did not enjoy hearing her speak of his love and faithfulness. He did not reply.

"No maid was ever blessed with so wonderful a lover," went on the happy girl.

"You are forgetting to take the parings," said the mother. "They will not cure you if you do not take them."

The fair maid of Fayal took the parings in a gourd full of water. She began to improve immediately and the next day she was entirely well.

"'Tis faith which saves and not parings," said her betrothed.

ST. BRENDAN'S ISLAND

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The Story of the Little Maid Who Found It

There was once an Irish monk called St. Brendan. One day he received a visit from a hermit who told him of a most marvelous island.

"Come and visit this earthly Paradise," said the hermit. "There the sun always shines. The birds wear golden crowns upon their heads and speak like humans."

The perfume of the island clung to the garments of the hermit for forty days.

Good St. Brendan asked many questions about the mysterious island and at last resolved to visit it and see for himself if all the wonders of which he had heard were really true. Accordingly, he built a coracle of wattle covered with hides tanned in oak bark and softened with butter. He loaded it with provisions to last for forty days. Then he persuaded some of his disciples to accompany him. This was somewhat difficult for they were timid about embarking upon this dangerous expedition in the frail boat. St. Brendan, however, succeeded in overcoming their fears and set out with a little group of his most devoted followers.

It was seven years before they returned to their native land. They were even more enthusiastic about their wonderful island than the hermit had been. They urged others to go and find out its marvels but nobody else was ever able to locate it.

They say that the island of St. Brendan was a floating island in the Atlantic. Good St. Brendan did not die but kept on living in the earthly Paradise of his isle. When the Christians were hard pressed in their battles with the Moors and were about to be pushed back into the sea the island of St. Brendan appeared upon the horizon, and the good saint himself came to fight against the Moors and bring victory to the Christians.

In the middle of the fifteenth century there was a little maid called Maria who lived in the island of Terceira. She heard the story of St. Brendan's isle from a Franciscan brother. Day and night she dreamed of it. She often sat upon the hillside of Monte Brasil, looking eagerly out over the broad expanse of sea, hoping with all her heart that the island would appear to her.

One day there landed in Terceira a cavalier of Rhodes named Vital. From his grandfather he had inherited some of the sacred relics of St. Brendan. He had come to the Azores in his search for the mysterious island. On his doublet he wore an eight-pointed star and a band upon which was embroidered in scarlet silk the motto, "By Faith." It was indeed "by faith" that he had embarked upon his quest.

The little maid, Maria, fell in love with him the moment she heard of him and his errand. She worshiped him as if he had been the good St. Brendan himself, but when she was with him she sat with downcast eyes, her long dark eyelashes sweeping her delicate cheek, and did not give him a glance, much less a word.

The young cavalier loved the little maid. He divided his holy relics of St. Brendan with her, and in return he begged of her that she might speak a word of love.

"To tell my love to you," said Maria, "I'd have to be where nobody but God could hear."

Indeed it was quite true that Maria needed to be where nobody but the good God could hear her when she spoke of her love for the cavalier Vital. The son of the wealthy Captain of the district had long admired her delicate beauty. He had already sought her for his bride. His jealousy against Vital rose up like a burning flame. He went to Maria and demanded that she should marry him at once.

Maria firmly refused.

"If you do not wed me," said the captain's son, "I shall have my father lock you up in the stronghold of St. Louis on the hillside."

"I should prefer to spend all my days confined in the castle of St. Louis rather than be your wife," said she. "Why can't you leave me in peace with my relics of the good St. Brendan!"

The mention of St. Brendan's relics stirred the young man's wrath even more. He well knew who it was who had given her the holy relics. His threat was fulfilled, and she was taken that very day to the castle of St. Louis and locked up in that stronghold.

Her room had a window, and there she sat high up in the tower of the castle looking down at the city of Angra beneath her.

"I had longed to serve the good God," she cried. "Why is it that my life has been made useless!"

At that very moment the earth trembled. The strong walls of the castle shook as if they had been built of paper.

Near the fort two doves were sitting on the branches of a cedar tree.

"Let us rescue this fair maid," said one dove to the other.

"Yes, let us carry her away on our wings," agreed the other.

That instant the earth shook so that the walls of the stronghold fell to the ground. The two doves spread out their snow-white wings and bore Maria away in safety.

Over houses and churches they flew. Over treetops and the broad expanse of the sea they rose. The city, the island, the sea, all disappeared from Maria's sight. She felt so dizzy that she closed her eyes.

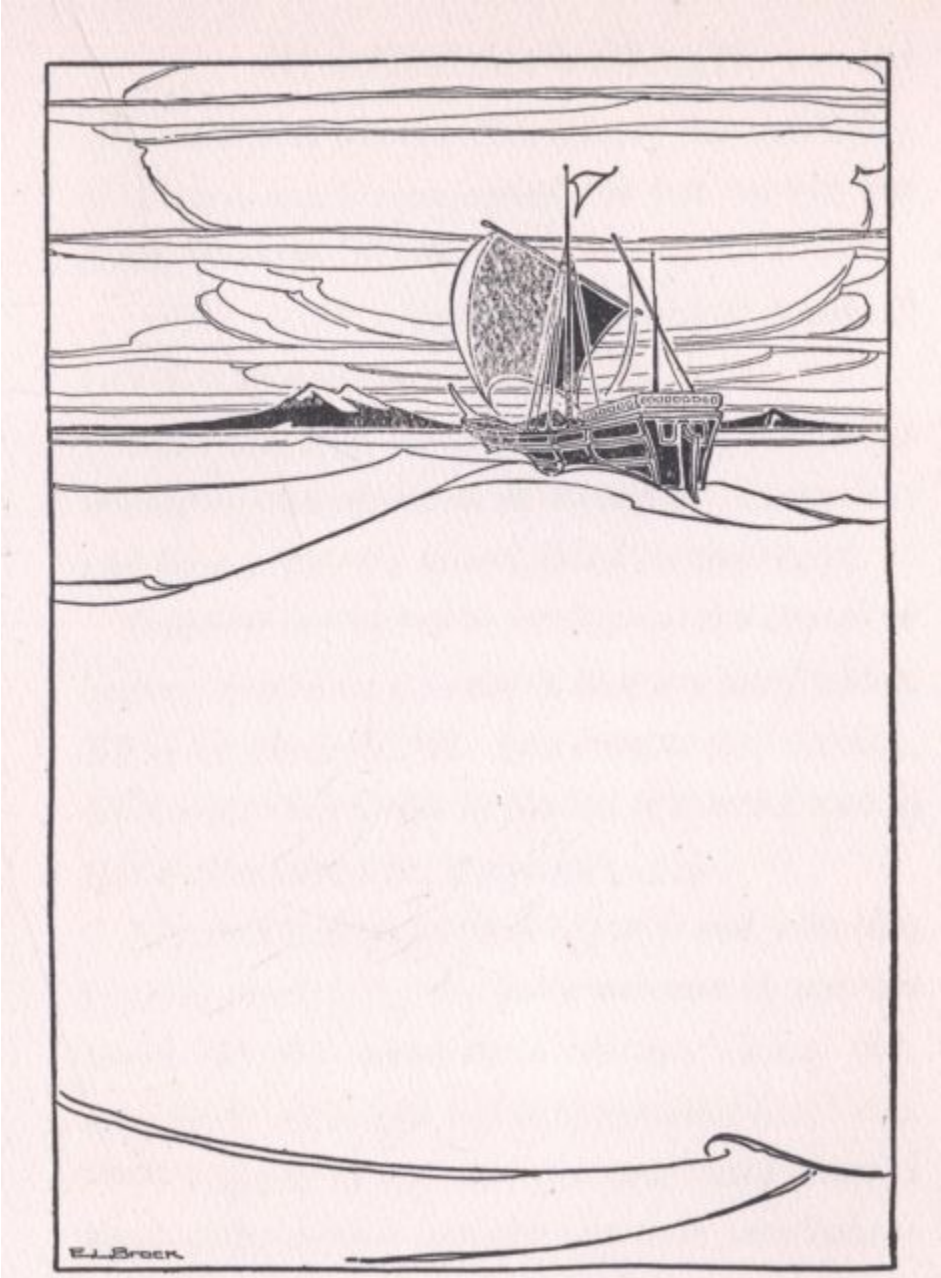
When she opened them again she was in an island of such beauty as she had never dreamed. It was indeed a garden of Paradise. The good St. Brendan himself, she saw, was the gardener.

The earthquake caused much damage in the island of Terceira. When the disappearance of Maria was known throughout the little city; of Angra nobody mourned for her as did the young cavalier Vital.

"What is the island to me without Maria?" he asked in sorrow.

Once more he embarked upon the sea in his search for the island of St. Brendan. Long days and long nights he tossed about on the ocean.

One evening just at sunset he saw the clouds of heaven descending to earth like a white ladder. Then he observed, far away upon the horizon, an island. He knew in his heart that he had at last a glimpse of St. Brendan's isle.



One evening just at sunset

One evening just at sunset

A gentle breeze swelled his sails and sent him rapidly toward it. As he drew near he saw his loved Maria standing with her arms outstretched. A bright light shone about her.

"To speak of my love to you," said she, "I have to be where nobody but God can hear—God and the gardener of this island, St. Brendan."

THE SILENT CAVALIER

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The Story of the Peach Tree

In the early days when the Azores had just been discovered there were many Flemish settlers who came to the islands. Among them there was a young cavalier of the order of St. George of Borgonha. His name was Jesus Maria and the reason why he had come was because a wise monk had told him that his path in life lay by way of the sea.

"Your name given to you in Holy Baptism," said the monk, "is Iesvs Maria. Transpose the letters and it says in Latin, *Maris es via*."

The young cavalier agreed that the sea must be his path of destiny and he at once set sail upon a long voyage which finally led him to the island of Fayal. He loved the rocky coast where the waves beat. He loved the deep ravine where the laughing brook ran, the lake in the ancient crater, the snow-capped summit of Mt. Pico which smiled down in stately majesty from the opposite island. He decided that this was to be his home.

"My path of Destiny was indeed the sea," he said. "The sea has brought me to a country which is very fair."

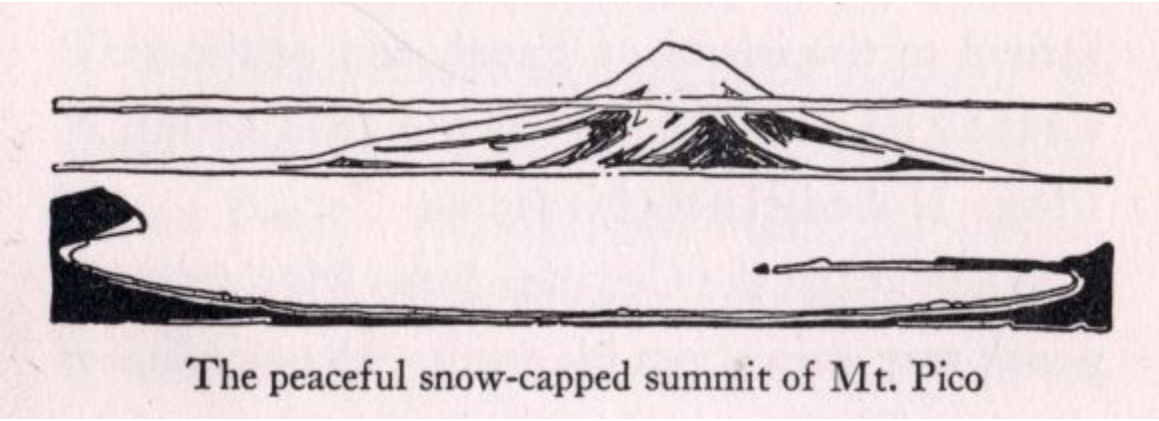
In the island of Fayal there were already some Portuguese settlers. One of these had a beautiful daughter Ida. The young Flemish cavalier thought

that she was the fairest maid he had ever seen. He fell deeply in love with her.

Now the cavaliers of the order of St. George of Borgonha had vowed that they would never wed. Jesus Maria could not break the solemn pledge which he had given when he joined the order. Neither could he forget the bright eyes of the Portuguese maiden Ida. It seemed as if his heart would break.

"I will leave this island and return to my own country," he thought.

Then he remembered the words which the wise monk had said about the sea being his path. He had followed that road and it had led him to a fair island home. He decided that he could not return to his native land of Flanders. Over across the shining blue water he looked up at the peaceful snow-capped summit of Mt. Pico. The sight of its majestic stillness seemed to give him strength to hold his tongue and keep him from speaking words of love to the beautiful Portuguese maiden. Never a word of love broke from him. The maiden Ida never knew the shrine she occupied in the heart of the Flemish cavalier.



The peaceful snow-capped summit of Mt. Pico

The peaceful snow-capped summit of Mt. Pico

The days dragged slowly by. The young man could bear no more. He felt that his strength could no longer endure on the same island with Ida. If he stayed near her he would break his vow.

One morning in a little boat he crossed the blue waters to the island of Pico. At the foot of the majestic mountain he loved, he built the little hut

which was to be his home. He never returned to the island of Fayal, and as the years went by he was spoken of as the good hermit of Pico. Nobody knew his secret.

When at last the Cavalier Jesus Maria died, a peach tree grew from his tomb—the emblem of silence. The leaf of this tree has the form of the human tongue. Its fruit has a stone shaped somewhat like the human heart. From this stone there comes a seed which when planted produces a new tree. Thus it is that words which bear fruit spring from the heart. It is silence which teaches one the gift of fruitful words, they say in the Azores.

THE ENCHANTED PALACE

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The Story of Lake Ginjal

In the village of Altos Ares in the island of Terceira there lived once upon a time a fair maid who had been baptized Perola, which means Pearl. As she grew older she was indeed like a rare pearl among the other maidens of the village, so great was the charm of her unusual beauty. She was the joy of her home and of the whole community for her disposition was as lovely as her face.

One bright spring morning Perola leaned over the cistern where she had gone to get water. Her reflection showed so plainly in the water that she paused to gaze into the smiling eyes of her own mirrored face. As she did so a magic spell was woven about her. The water fairy who had come to the cistern had seen her great beauty and had thrown a charm over her. In a moment more she fell into the cistern to join her reflection there.

When Perola could not be found there was great excitement in the little village. Nobody could guess what had become of her. Her mother prayed devoutly for her safety in the church of St. Roque. All the villagers sought for her in every possible place.

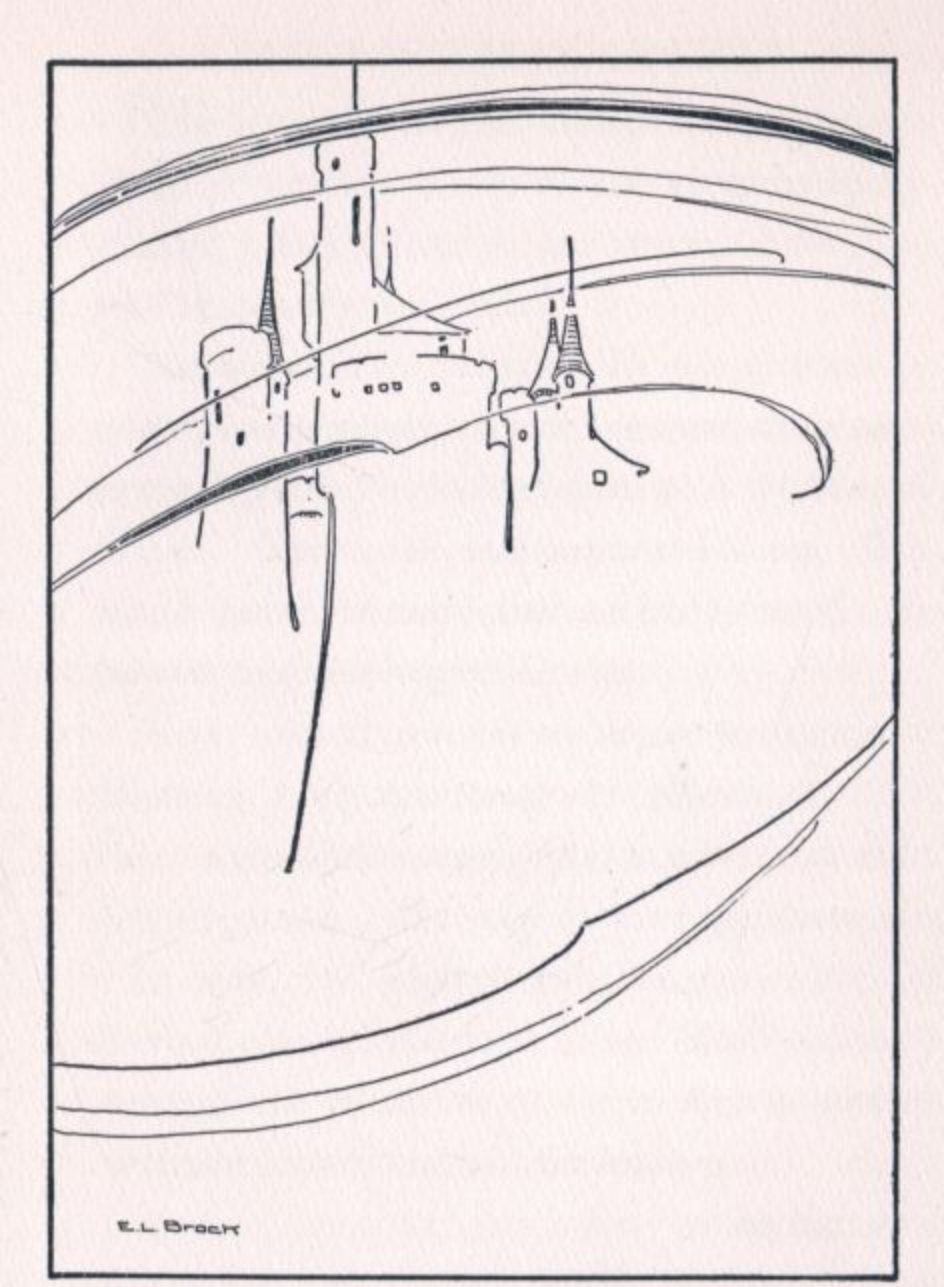
Now at the north of the island of Terceira there are groups of tiny rocks in the sea which are called the Biscoitos or biscuits. Here there lived a wise old woman who had a great reputation among all the people of the island for her knowledge.

"Let us go to consult the wise woman of Biscoitos," said one of the village youths when they had sought long and faithfully for a trace of the hiding-place into which Perola might have vanished.

Accordingly, the young men of Altos Ares went to the wise woman, and this is what she told them:

"The fair pearl of your village is safe from the fishers of pearls. She is hidden away in an enchanted palace of marble and ivory and tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl."

The water fairy had taken Perola through an underground passage which led from the cistern to the beautiful enchanted palace in the lake of Ginjal. There she was kept in hiding. The fairies never dreamed that anybody would ever be able to guess where she was.



The beautiful enchanted palace in the lake of Ginjal

The beautiful enchanted palace in the lake of Ginjal

Now, with the words of the wise woman of Biscoitos to guide them, the youths of Altos Ares organized an expedition to search for their lost playmate. The sons of the magistrate, the rich men, the learned men of the island of Terceira joined this expedition. They searched through the whole island for a place where an enchanted palace might be located.

At last, upon St. John's Day when the days and nights are of equal length, this band of the brave youths of Terceira came to the shores of Lake Ginjal in the interior of the island.

"This is surely the enchanted place. Here in this lake must lie the fairies' palace of marble and ivory and tortoise shell and mother-of-pearl!" somebody cried.

"How shall we be able to approach this magic palace and rescue Perola?" asked one.

"How shall we be able to break her enchantment?" asked another.

"Let us camp here upon the border of the lake and consider how best to proceed," said the leader of the expedition.

Now at that very hour on St. John's Day the mother of Perola was in the church of St. Roque in Altos Ares praying devoutly for her daughter's safe return.

Suddenly she heard a strange voice. These were the words which fell upon her ears:

"Your prayers and the perseverance of the youths of the island have at last triumphed. Go in peace. On the day of St. Peter at the hour of sunset your daughter shall be restored to you. Her enchantment shall be broken and she shall be brought to the bank of Lake Ginjal in a boat of ivory, drawn by a snow-white swan."

When the youths encamped upon the shore of the lake heard these tidings they set up such a shout of joy that it was indeed enough to break any enchantment.

At the time appointed Perola was brought to the bank of the lake in a boat of ivory drawn by a snow-white swan, just as fair and lovely as upon the day when she had vanished from the little village of Altos Ares.

This is the story of the Lake of Ginjal. It is quite probable that the enchanted palace of the water fairies is still there.

THE FRIEND OF THE DEVIL

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A Story of the Islands in the Bay of Angra

Once upon a time there was a handsome Flemish youth who came to the island of Fayal. His name was Fernâo de Hutra. He fell in love with a beautiful nun in the convent of the Gloria in the city of Horta.

One day the Devil appeared to him.

"Since you fell in love with this fair nun, I see you are a friend of mine," said the Devil.

The young man had not known this, but he replied:

"Say rather that I will be your friend if you help me get possession of this nun I love."

"Very well," said the Devil, "but you will have to make a bargain with me."

"What is it?" asked Fernâo, rather anxiously.

"Grant me your solemn pledge that you'll give me all your children," responded the Devil.

"Agreed," said Fernâo.

After that he saw much of the Devil. The nun, however, was as devout as she was beautiful. She refused to break the vows she had made and flee with the Flemish youth. She firmly resisted both him and the Devil.

"You are not a true friend to me after all," said Fernâo to the Devil sadly.

"But you are my friend," said the Devil in reply.

Soon after, Fernâo de Hutra left the city of Horta and the island of Fayal and went to join his kinsmen who had settled in Angra in the island of Terceira. Here his handsome face won many friends for him among the youth of the city. To some of these he confided the story of his relations with the Devil.

Now it happened that in the year 1666 the first bull fight was held in Angra. To this very day the island of Terceira is the only one in the Azores which has bull fights.

Fernâo had taken part in this. He was one of the chief organizers of the bull fight held on St. John's Day of the following year. That day all the men and women and children of the city of Angra assembled in the public square before the fort. The bullfighters, richly clad, rode forth upon prancing steeds decked in costly velvets with streamers and ribbons of gold and silver which sparkled in the bright sunlight. The youths were resplendent in their garments of crimson or purple or blue velvet, richly embroidered. Fernâo de Hutra was radiant in his jacket of blue decked with pearls, with a plumed hat upon his handsome head. He carried a yellow banner embroidered with the arms of his family.

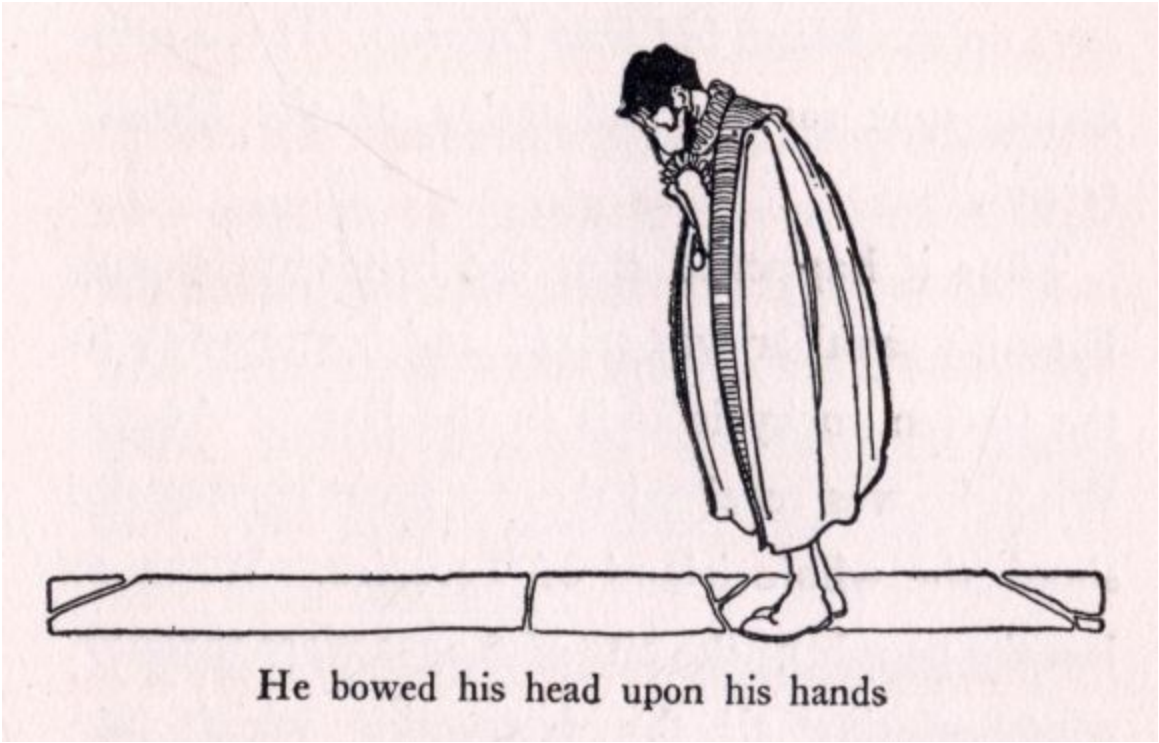
Gay music sounded. The bulls were brought into the ring. The bullfighters saluted and the fight began.

In the windows of the castle the daughters of the chief magistrate of the city of Angra were seated among their friends. The eldest daughter, Sophia, was the most beautiful maid of the whole city. The magistrate

watched her anxiously as her fair cheek alternately paled and flushed as the struggle went on. There could be no doubt about the fact that there was love in her eyes as they rested upon the handsome young Flemish cavalier, Fernâo de Hutra. She was wearing his colors and in her hand she carefully held his bouquet of flowers. The ribbon which tied them secured also a piece of paper upon which were written these words:

"Oh, beautiful maid of my heart's desire,
For your dear sake I'd go through fire."

The magistrate withdrew from the gay scene into the silence of the great hall of the castle. He bowed his head upon his hands.



He bowed his head upon his hands

"This youth is the friend of the Devil," he groaned. "I cannot consent to my daughter's marriage to him. He has promised to give all his children to the Devil, they say. I cannot allow my own grandchildren to be given to the Devil."

That very day he began to plot how to get rid of the handsome young Fernâo.

Now in the bay before the city of Angra there are two rocky islands called to-day just as they were then, the Ilheos de Cabras, the islands of goats. The brother-in-law of the magistrate was the owner of these barren islands. There were a few goats there, a few mulberry bushes, and a tiny spring of fresh water. The magistrate called his brother-in-law to him as soon as the bull fight was over. He told him all his fears and asked if he might use the islands as a place of banishment for the young Flemish cavalier who was the friend of the Devil.

"You are quite welcome to use these islands for so worthy a purpose," replied his brother-in-law. "Indeed, I have often thought that the deep cave on the island led into Inferno. It is a most fitting spot for the habitation of the Devil's friend."

Thus it happened that the handsome young Flemish cavalier was seized and borne away to the barren rocky islands in the Bay of Angra. When he was received there a great earthquake shook the whole island of Terceira. When at last the people of the city of Angra were through contemplating all the destruction which had been wrought, some one looked in the direction of the island of goats. They saw that a great piece had been broken away from one of the islands.

Thus it was that the Devil received his friend.

THE MILLER'S CLOAK

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The Story of a Man Who Tried to Stay Home from Church

There was once a pious miller. He was always to be found in the church praying. He prayed for the dead. He prayed for those who were alive. He prayed for all who suffered, for the homeless ones, for the hungry ones. He prayed for those upon the sea and those upon the land.

Now it happened that a terrible storm smote the island. The sea beat high against the rocky coast. Lightning flashed. Thunder roared. The wind howled. The rain fell in torrents as if it were a flood.

"Don't go out in the storm to-night," counselled his wife. "It is not a suitable night for one to go to church."

"I agree with you," replied the miller. "I do not need to go to the church in this fierce storm. Surely my prayers of other days and nights have been so many that to-night I have earned rest in my own dry house. The good God will pardon me."

The miller wrapped his heavy brown cloak about him and lay down upon his bed. The wind shrieked. Thunder shook the earth. Unseen hands pulled the miller's cloak from off his bed.

"The wind has blown out the candle! Light another!" cried the miller to his wife.

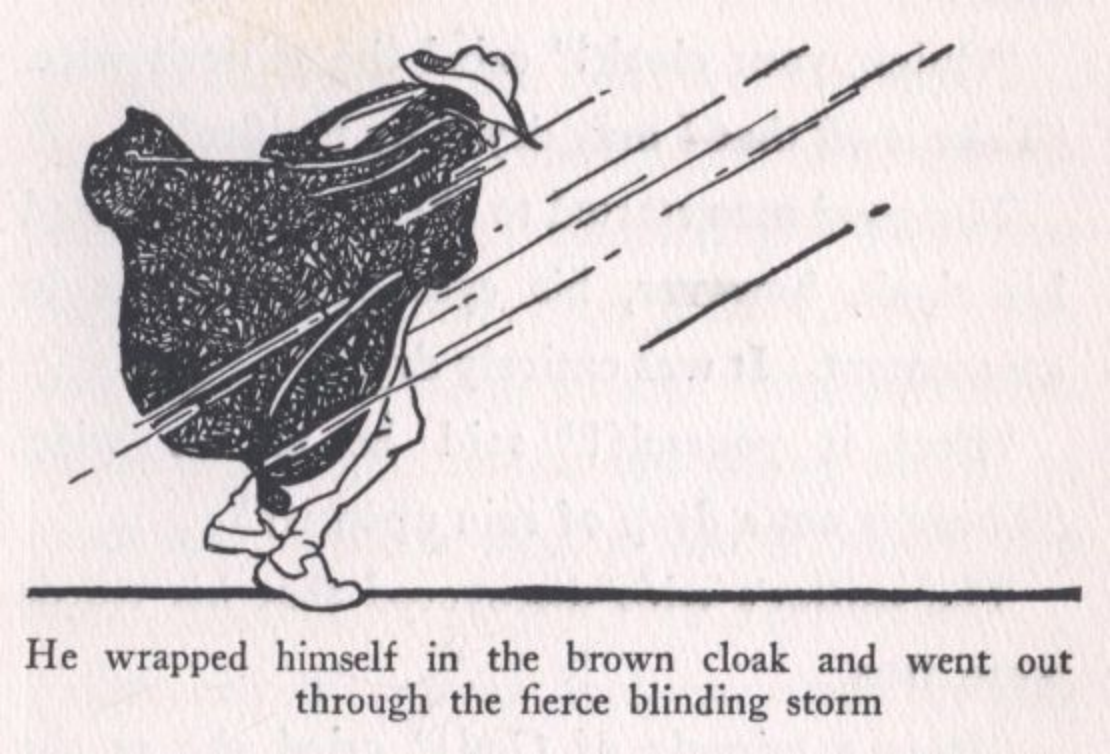
By the dim light of the candle the good miller again arranged his bed. He wrapped his heavy mantle about him and once more tried to sleep. Again his cloak was pulled from off his bed as if by unseen hands.

There was no rest for the miller that night. His cloak could not be made to cover him as he lay upon his bed.

"I might as well go to church and pray," he told his wife. "I can't rest here."

He wrapped himself in the brown cloak and went out to the church through the fierce blinding storm. He prayed for the dead. He prayed for

those who were alive. He prayed for all who suffered, for the homeless ones, the hungry ones. He prayed for those upon the sea, for those upon the land.



He wrapped himself in the brown cloak and went out through the fierce blinding storm

"Surely the prayers of the pious are needed this night," said the miller to his wife when he came in out of the fierce storm.

Lightning flashed. Thunder roared. The rain fell in torrents. The wind howled and drove the pouring rain against the windows. It blew in sheets through the door before the miller had time to close it behind him. The storm beat upon the thatched roof as if it would carry it away.

"Quick, your cloak!" cried the miller's wife. "Take it off that I may dry it by the fire!"

The good man started to obey. As he touched his cloak, however, his eyes opened wide in amazement. It was entirely dry.

"Feel it yourself!" said he to his wife. "There is not a drop of rain upon it!"

The miller's wife discovered that his words were true.

"It is a miracle of God!" cried she as she crossed herself.

THE MAGIC MOUTHFUL

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The Story of a Woman Who Quarreled

Once upon a time there was a woman who lived a most unhappy life. She and her husband were always quarreling. Every day when he came home from work he was cross, and said harsh words to her. She would respond with bitter words, and things would go from bad to worse until at last he would beat her.

One day the woman took her water jar and went to the fountain to fill it as usual. She was so unhappy that great tears were rolling down her cheeks.

There was a little old woman standing by the fountain.

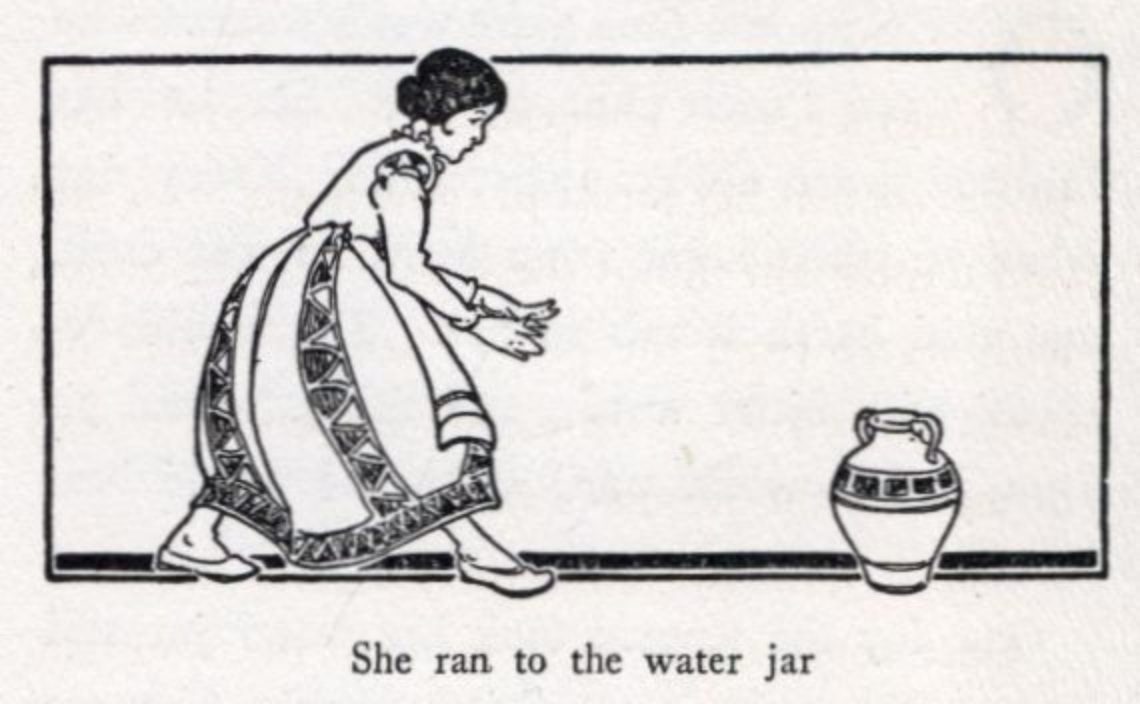
"What is the matter, my daughter?" she asked as she saw the tears upon the poor woman's cheeks.

When she had heard all the story, the little old woman took the water jar and filled it at the fountain.

"Go home, my daughter," she said. "Keep this water in the jar. The moment your husband says a cross word to you, fill your mouth with the water."

The sad woman thanked her and went to her own house.

The next day when her husband came home he began to scold as usual. She was about to reply when she suddenly remembered the old woman's advice. She ran to the water jar and filled her mouth with water.



She ran to the water jar

To her great amazement her husband soon stopped scolding. That night, for the first time in many weeks, she went to sleep without a beating.

Things kept on going well for several days. Just as soon as her husband came home cross and said unpleasant things she would fill her mouth with water from the jar. Then he would get over being cross. Now there were smiles instead of tears on the woman's face.

At last, however, the water jar grew empty.

Once more the woman went to the fountain, hoping that she would again find the little old woman who had given her the magic water. She found her waiting at the fountain.

"How did my prescription succeed, dear daughter?" she asked as soon as she saw her.

"How can I ever thank you for all you have done for me!" cried the woman. "Now I am happy once more. My husband no longer beats me. I did not dream that my life could ever be so full of joy. Give me, I pray you, some more of the magic water."

The little old woman smiled gently.

"Dear daughter," she said, "the water which I put in your jar is nothing but the water from this fountain. It is the very same which you always carry home. This is the secret: When your mouth is full of water you cannot reply when your husband says cross words to you. If you do not keep up the quarrel it soon ends. That is why your life is happy now instead of sad. Go home, and whenever your husband says an unkind word pretend that your mouth is full of water and do not reply. Go in peace, my child."

The woman always remembered this good advice and never again quarreled with her husband. When she had children of her own she passed on to them the secret.

Now it is generally known in the Azores that if one does not want to keep up a quarrel it is well to pretend that his mouth is full of water. This is the reason why the people of the islands are so peaceful and happy.

THE MESSENGERS

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The Story of a Youth Who Met Death

There lived once upon a time in the island of Terceira a youth whose name was Vladmiro. He had come from Flanders, a cavalier of the order of St. John. He was betrothed to a fair maid of the island.

One morning he was hunting in the forest of cedars when he suddenly saw Death standing before him. He fell upon his knees and sent up a fervent prayer to the Holy Virgin.

Then he said to Death: "O Death, why is it that you have come in search of me so soon? I am young, rich, happy. I am betrothed to a maid who loves me. Life looks very bright and fair."

Death stepped back a pace.

"Your prayer to the Holy Mother has saved you," he said. "I had indeed come in search of you. You were about to die from an accident with your hunting arms. See, I have already retreated a pace. I have decided not to take you with me this time."

Vladmiro returned a prayer of thanksgiving. Then he said:

"O Death, I am going to make a request of you. Please do not come up to me so suddenly again. It gives me a fright. Next time you come for me will you please be so kind as to send messengers in advance to give me a little warning?"

"Yes, young cavalier," responded Death. "I will gladly do what you ask. I give you my promise that next time I will send my messengers ahead of me to warn you that I am approaching."

With these words Death withdrew and went on alone through the forest of cedars.

The spring of that very year the young cavalier married the fair maid who loved him. Life was full of joy. Many children were born to the worthy couple. Riches and honors came, too. The years sped by as if they flew on wings.

At last a half century had passed. Vladmiro held his grandchildren upon his knees and told them the story of the day he met Death in the forest of cedars.

"We are glad that Death passed on and left you," said the children.

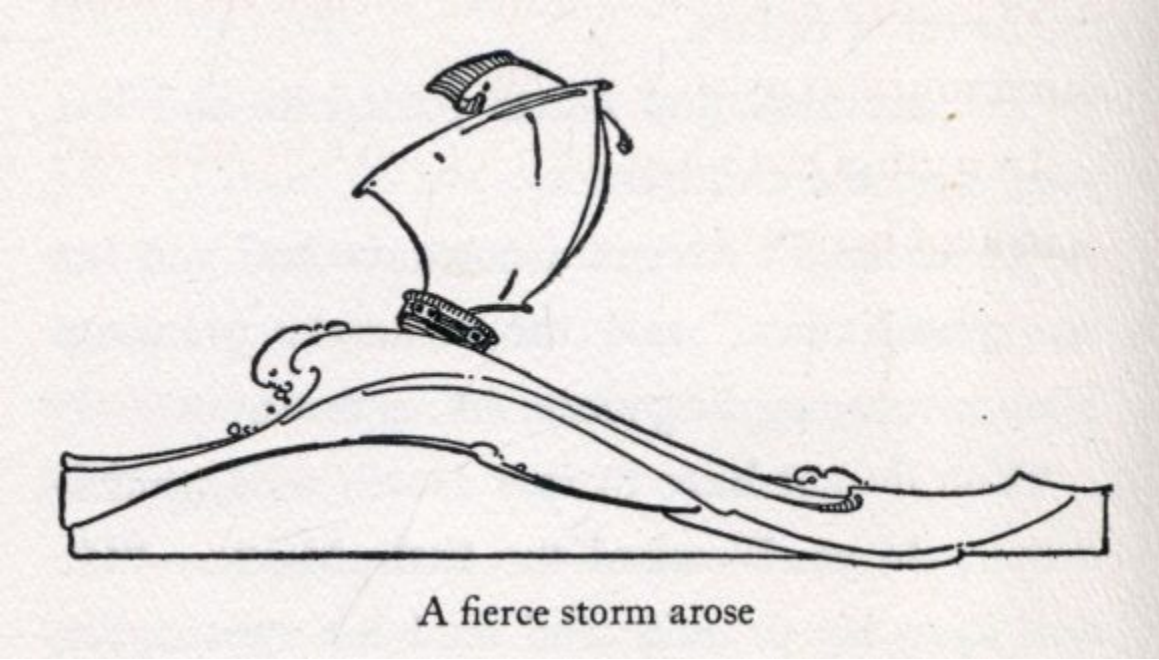
"If he hadn't we could not have had you for our grandfather," said the namesake grandson Vladmiro, snuggling closer in his arms.

"You do not have to fear Death now, grandfather, do you?" asked the little Maria. "He will keep his promise and send his messengers, don't you think so?"

"Yes, Death is a good Christian and will keep his word," replied the aged cavalier.

The next morning he set sail for the island of Fayal where there were other grandchildren to visit in the home of his married daughter, Francisca.

On the voyage a fierce storm arose. The small boat was buffetted about by the gales. Suddenly Vladmiro was startled to see Death standing beside him just as in the forest years ago when he had been young.



A fierce storm arose

"Why have you come to-day?" he cried in alarm. "Why is it that you have not kept your word? You gave me your promise that you would send your messengers, next time you came, to warn me of your approach."

"I have kept my word," said Death. "I have sent my messengers."

"Where are they?" asked the old man in amazement.

Death pointed to Vladmiro's snowy hair.

"I have sent my messengers in your white locks, your failing eyesight and hearing, the wrinkles on your cheeks. Can it be that you have failed to recognize them?"

Vladmiro bowed his head in silence and without a murmur went with Death.

In truth, Death had been a good Christian and had kept his word.

THE END